

CARTON 10:14 THE BROTHERHOOD of SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

Miscellaneous documents

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BY-LAWS GOVERNING THE COLORED WOMEN'S ECONOMIC COUNCIL
(LADIES AUXILIARY OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEP-
ING CAR PORTERS)

PREAMBLE: It shall be the object of this Council to advance, protect and conserve the interests, economic, social, moral and intellectual of its members; to foster, develop and maintain a constructive interest in the economic status and future of the race, to seek wider economic opportunities for our Negro youth; to increase and capitalize the purchasing power of our group income; to investigate and study all problems and conditions that affect the economic well being of the Negro youth; to stimulate, encourage and develop co-operative societies, labor unions and all constructive enterprises that promise and make for our group development; to emphasize the necessity, value and power of economic organization, education and agitation; to foster the spirit of co-operation in all fields of Negro endeavor, and to combine with various agencies, social, civic, political, educational and religious for the improvement of the conditions of Negro life in the various communities in the country; to co-operate with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, to serve as its auxiliary, the vanguard of the Negroes' economic emancipation.

ARTICLE I
TITLE AND LOCATION

This organization shall be known as the Colored Women's Economic Council of America; subtitle: Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, with headquarters located in New York City until otherwise ordered by the Convention of the C. W. E. C. of A.

ARTICLE II
OFFICERS

There shall be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, organizers, etc., until otherwise provided for by the Convention.

ARTICLE III
GENERAL ORGANIZER

Section 1. The Executive power of the Colored Women's Economic Council shall be invested in the General Organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He shall have plenary powers and general supervision, promotion and development of all aspects developments, councils, offices and officers of the Council, until otherwise provided for in the Convention assembled.

Section 2. He shall have the power, with the advice of the general executive committee, to appoint all subordinate officials and fix their compensations.

Section 3. He shall have the power to suspend or remove any officer for sufficient cause, with the advice of the General Executive Committee. He shall formulate all policies of the Council in collaboration with the General Executive and Advisory Committees of the Brotherhood, together with the respective presidents, secretaries and executive committees of the local councils. He shall execute the said policies or cause same to be executed through such subordinate officers as he deems advisable.

ARTICLE IV PRESIDENT

The national work of organizing and supervising the Council shall reside in the hands of the General Organizer until the national officers are elected or appointed and assume control.

ARTICLE V GENERAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The General Executive Committee shall be composed of the presidents and secretaries of the Council, and they shall co-operate and advise with the General Organizer on matters of organizational, educational and agitational policy, either through correspondence or directly, according as conditions warrant.

ARTICLE VI CONVENTION

The General Executive Committee and the General Organizer shall formulate the plans for the first Convention which shall be held at the same time of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

ARTICLE VII LOCAL COUNCILS

Section 1. All local councils of the Council must be organized under the general supervision of the General Organizer.

Section 2. Local councils may be suspended or dissolved by the General Organizer for any infraction of the tentative constitution and by-laws by its local officers.

ARTICLE VIII

The local councils shall conduct public educational meetings once a month or as often as the local situation seems to justify.

ARTICLE IX
Local councils shall be composed of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer or executive committee and such other committees as the development of the council may seem to warrant.

ARTICLE X

The local councils shall be subordinate and responsible to the headquarters of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, until otherwise provided for in Convention.

ARTICLE XI

The jurisdiction of the councils shall be such as shall have been assigned by the General Organizer.

ARTICLE XII

All literature, application blanks, membership cards and such other paraphernalia which may be required by the local council shall be supplied by the General Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

ARTICLE XIII

The local council, president and secretary-treasurer shall be jointly responsible for the disbursements of all funds. The local council secretary-treasurer shall be bonded. The same to be approved by the General secretary-treasurer, payable to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters until otherwise provided for.

ARTICLE XIV

The resignation of any local council officer must be in writing and addressed to the General Organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

ARTICLE XV

When visiting local councils, any general officer shall be recognized as the superior officer, shall have the right to inspect records, and advise with local officials and organizing committee.

ARTICLE XVI

It shall be the duty of the president of the local council to preside at all meetings, public and membership of the local council, to advise and co-operate with the executive committee on methods and plans for efficiently and effectively carrying out the policies and programme of the council. She shall be required to report twice a month on the general situation in her council to the General Organizer. She shall be required also to make suggestions from time to time for the general development of the Movement.

Section 2. The Vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president.

ARTICLE VII
SECRETARY-TREASURER

It shall be the duty of the local council secretary-treasurer to keep proper records of all proceedings of each meeting, the number present and of all moneys collected and disposed of.

ARTICLE XVIII

The moneys of the local council shall be employed chiefly for the purchasing of paraphernalia, the promotion of education, organization and agitation for the economic advancement of the council and Brotherhood, in particular and the race in general.

BY-LAWS AND RULES

ARTICLE I

The rules of order for the government of the general and local councils shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

ARTICLE II

Salaries shall be paid officials when necessary and possible, the same to be fixed by the General Organizer until otherwise provided for in Convention.

ARTICLE III

The following oath must be taken by all officers of the General and Local Councils: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully and honorably fulfill the duties of this office which I am about to assume to the best of my ability and pledge my undivided allegiance to the Constitution and By-Laws of the Council and the principle advocated by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters."

ARTICLE IV

This Constitution and By-Laws shall be amended by the General Executive Committee in consultation and collaboration with the General Organizer until otherwise provided for by the Convention.

ARTICLE V

The joining fee of the Colored Women's Economic Council or the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters shall be one (1.00) dollar and forty cents a month shall constitute the dues until otherwise provided for in Convention assembled.

ARTICLE VI

The influence of sympathy of the Colored Women's Economic Council

shall not be used in favor of any political or religious organization whatever. No partisan, political discussions shall be permitted in any meetings of the general or local councils.

ARTICLE VII

All necessary expenses incurred by the general or local officers while in performance or discharge of their official duties in the interest of the Council, shall be paid from the treasury of the local or general body.

ARTICLE VIII MEMBERSHIP

Any woman of the Negro race is eligible to membership in the Council or who is a wife or relative of a Pullman porter, or one who is sympathetic with the aims and objects and methods and principles of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

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PROGRAM FOR THE
COLORED WOMEN'S ECONOMIC COUNCIL

1. Call meeting and form temporary organization
2. Select temporary secretary. The secretary should list the names and addresses of all the women present and systematically enter them in a membership book.
3. Call second meeting in the next two weeks following the first. In calling second meeting, notify all of the ladies of the fact that they are to go into permanent organization by the election of officers. If there is any difficulty in settling on a president, the organization may function with a secretary-treasurer until at such time as it is possible to elect a president. It is desirable however, that the permanent organization begins with a full set of officers.
4. At the second meeting the Constitution of the Organization ought to be read if possible. It should be read and accepted and ratified as soon as possible.
5. If conditions in a district would seem to indicate that a porter would be victimized by the Pullman Company if his wife served in an official capacity in the Council, it will be sound policy not to have a Pullman porter's wife serve openly for the Council. It is quite unlikely, however, at this stage of the Organization, that the Pullman Company would attempt to take reprisals against a Pullman porter because of the activities of his wife in this Council.
6. A supply of application blanks will be placed in the hands of the secretary-treasurer, also dues cards. No delay in organization is necessary, however, because of the absence of these paraphernalia.
7. Any girl or woman is eligible to membership in the Council who is a relative of a Pullman porter or sympathetic with the aims and object of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.
8. The Council should organize an Economic Vigilance Committee whose purpose it will be to watch out for all forms of economic discriminations against the Negro, such as the replacing of Negro workers by white workers in any field, the paying of Negro workers less than white workers, the barring of Negro workers from certain fields of industry. It should keep strict watch over the merchants of the city in order intelligently to oppose the policy of any shop keeper which discriminates against the Negro patrons, either with respect to price of goods sold them or the manner of service given.
9. The Council should watch out to protect the race against movements calculated to segregate the Negro, thereby depreciating Negro property values.

10. It should stimulate and encourage the spirit of home owning among Negroes. Where conditions prevail that are against any extensive home owning on the part of the masses such as obtain in New York, Chicago, and some of the big cities, the Council should be active in lending its aid and support in protecting its members from the rapacity of conscienceless land lords. It should study the rent laws in every city so as to be prepared to give constructive advice to the Negroes on matters involving their interests as tenants.
11. The Council should study the co-operative movement so that it will be able to advise the Negro in order that he might utilize the co-operative principle of buying food, clothing, and shelter. This method has been tested by experience in America and Europe as being very effective in increasing the purchasing power of the dollar. In the big cities, apartments may be bought on the co-operative plan. A co-operative group may be begun by three or four persons who come together and agree upon a certain plan for purchasing certain things. They simply agree to put into a common fund a certain amount of money at certain periods. The amount agreed upon to begin with ought to be quite small so that no one will be materially inconvenienced. The members could meet in each other's homes from time to time. It is not necessary to rent any special place for the co-operative society. It will be advisable for the Council to organize a committee for the study of the co-operative movement. It might be appropriately termed the Co-operative Committee.
12. The Council ought also to organize a Trade Union Committee whose duty it shall be to study the trade union movement as a whole and especially in relation to Negroes. The committee should take up all discriminations against Negro workers by white unions and resolutely fight for the right of Negro workers to join various trade unions. Wherever it is found impossible for Negroes to join a white union, the Negro workers should be advised and encouraged to form an independent union of their own. They should be advised however, against permitting themselves to be pitted against the white unions by the white bosses whose object is to reduce wages.
13. The Council should advocate higher efficiency on the part of Negro workers, so that they may be able legitimately to demand the same wages received by white workers. Industry, thrift, sobriety, responsibility, honesty and courtesy should be emphasized as indispensable constituents of efficiency.
14. The Council should be ever alert in seeking new and better employment for Negro men and women, and the Negro youth of training who are coming out of schools and colleges.
15. The Council should organize a Negro Business Committee whose purpose it shall be to encourage the patronizing of Negro concerns by Negro consumers. This course of action is necessary since it affords opportunities to Negro youth of training which they would otherwise be denied. This is a step toward economic independence for the group. Negro businesses, on the other hand, should be warned and advised on the necessity of their giving the same quality of commodities, service, for the same

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price given by white enterprises, that they cannot expect Negroes to patronize them merely because they are Negroes. They must be shown that it will be necessary for them to compete with white business men for Negro trade, otherwise, they might be encouraged to depend upon race also for business success and consequently develop a dangerous inefficiency, which would spell disaster in the end. Care should be taken not to launch any special campaign of opposition to white business men merely because they are white. This is absolutely unsound, since the majority of Negroes in every city are employed by white people. Besides it would tend to fan the flames of race prejudice. Negroes can be shown that it is logical, wise and advantageous for them to support their own race business men because of the fact that it economically strengthens the entire group.

16. The Council should form a committee on employment whose purpose it should be to investigate all of the white concerns doing business in Negro communities, and insist upon their hiring some Negro help. A systematic campaign should be planned to this end wherever opposition is met with.
17. The Council should co-operate with all civic, social, educational and religious agencies that make for the advancement and improvement of Negro interests in the community.
18. The Council should be ever alert to guard against movements that are calculated to circumscribe and limit educational opportunities and facilities for the Negro.

IMMEDIATE PROGRAM

1. The Council should plan an entertainment committee whose purpose it should be the giving of various affairs such as dances, parties, concerts, etc., with a view to raising revenue for the organization. SUGGESTIONS: Bus rides, boat rides, outings, etc.
2. The Council should co-operate with the local organization of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters with a view to getting porters to join the Brotherhood, to pay dues. It should seek to break down all opposition to the Brotherhood which is founded upon ignorance, fear or prejudice, by persistent, unemotional, logical arguments.
3. The Council should urge the women to attend the public meetings of the Brotherhood. It should organize the ushers to handle the seating of people and the taking up of collections at meetings. It should help in the advertising of said meetings. It should lend both moral and financial support whenever requested and able.
4. The Council should plan to send a delegate or delegates to conferences or congresses of white women whose purpose it is to discuss problems affecting the economic life of the community or nation.

TO THE ORGANIZERS.

IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME

I

UNITED STATES MEDIATION BOARD

It is the belief and opinion of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters that the United States Mediation Board violated the spirit and letter of the Railway Labor Act and practices discrimination in the case of the Pullman porters either on account of race, or on account of the fact that the Brotherhood is too young, small, or weak an organization to successfully challenge the Board.

It is mistaken however, we shall challenge it with all of the power which we can command.

OUR FIRST STEP:

(a) The General Organizer on Tuesday, June 12, held a special conference with the Board on its decision in our case. The purpose of the Conference was to determine from the Board, the reason for its decision, the grounds upon which said decision was based, and the wherefore for its deviation from the procedure in the handling of the case of 600 employees of the Kansas City, Mexico, Orient Railroad, where it recommended to President Coolidge the establishment of an Emergency Board, the same being established and the members appointed therefor, forthwith.

The General Organizer was advised after an extended conference to send a statement to the Board setting forth our grievances against the Board, and it would go thoroughly into said grievances at its next session in July and send us its reply. It requested that we do not give the press any material on the controversy between the Board and the Brotherhood until it had made its reply to our statement.

PLAN TO CHALLENGE BOARD

(a) Giving publicity to letter of Brotherhood to Board and of Board to Brotherhood.

(b) Seeking a Congressional investigation of the Board's action in the porters' case. We shall interest our friends in Congress to institute an inquiry into the policy and procedure of the Board. At the proper and most strategic time, the organizers shall be advised to interest their local Congressmen and Senators in this inquiry. Each organizer should get the porters and friends and influential Negro and white organizations to write the Congressmen and Senators of their respective districts, urging them to fight for and support such an inquiry.

(c) The Brotherhood shall also seek to secure a Senate investigation of the Pullman Company.

(d) The Brotherhood shall also seek to secure an amendment to the Railway Labor Act favorable to our situation. Mr. Henry T. Hunt, Counsel for the Brotherhood, is now studying the draft of such an amendment, and we shall attempt to get some Congressmen and Senators to introduce said amendment in the House and Senate, upon the reconvening of Congress.

Most Senators and Congressmen will be inclined to give our case a hearing now owing to the fact that a National campaign is on. We shall seek to interest the representatives of all parties in this fight.

Whether these efforts bear fruit or not, they will give us a desirable and valuable flood of publicity which will effectively center public attention on our case. It is this publicity which is killing the Pullman Company's power of resistance to the Brotherhood.

A copy of the statement to the Mediation Board will be sent all organizers. A copy of the reply of the Board to the Brotherhood will be sent you also so that you may give both letters to your local papers.

II POSTPONEMENT OF STRIKE

(a) It has left the Pullman Company at sea, in a state of uncertainty. The Company does not know when strike may be called. The Brotherhood is not required to take another strike vote in order to call a strike. It may be called any minute.

(b) The advice of Mr. William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, to postpone strike, has brought the American Federation of Labor thoroughly into the Pullman porters' fight.

(c) Postponement of strike secured for Brotherhood a million dollars worth of publicity. Big dailies are writing favorable editorials on our case. The big dailies and magazines will also ~~begin~~ to write a series of feature articles on the Brotherhood and the public significance of our fight.

(d) Postponement of strike demonstrated to the Pullman Company and the public the fine discipline of our membership. In the opinion of the chiefs of the Big Four Brotherhood, this fact is a source of great strength to the Organization and throws great fear into the heart of the Company, since it sees that the organization is capable of acting instantly.

(e) Postponement of strike enabled the Brotherhood to see and study method by the Company to break the strike. It saw the plan of the Company to prevent Brotherhood men from getting to strike breakers, by housing and feeding them in the yards and the terminal stations. In the event that the Pullman Company refuses to recognize the Brotherhood and grant a substantial increase in wages and the 240-hour work month, the Brotherhood will stage a strike. I have worked out a scheme which will enable us effectively to overcome the Plan of the Company to operate the cars by housing and feeding the strike breakers in the yards and terminal station. If we had struck Friday noon, June 8th, we could not have overcome this handicap, for we could not have gotten to the strike breakers.

(f) Postponement of strike enabled organizers of the Brotherhood to gauge the temper of the membership. It knows now more definitely the extent to which the membership will respond to a strike call.

(g) Postponement of strike, upon President Green's advice, definitely indicated to the Pullman Company that the American Federation of Labor is ready to back our fight. This is a source of great alarm to the Company, for the Company has sent all of its propaganda villifying the character of the General Organizer to the President and Secretary-Treasurer of the A. F. of L. The General Organizer was informed of this when he took up the question of the American Federation of Labor giving concrete support to the Brotherhood in the strike. Mr. Frank Morrison, Secretary of the Federation requested the General Organizer to send him a statement on the charges the Pullman Company had made against him for his personal information. The same old charges that the General Organizer is an atheist, communist and a believer in free love and a number of other ridiculous things, were made. Mr. Morrison readily agreed that the Pullman Company would be interested in disseminating such

propaganda so as to alienate support from the Brotherhood. This shows that the Pullman Company is afraid of the power which the Brotherhood will get from affiliation with the A. F. of L. While the Company has attempted, on the one hand, to keep the Brotherhood out of the American Federation of Labor, it has sought, through its lackey editors such as Bibb of the Whip, the St. Louis Argus and its horde of stool-pigeons, to inflame and prejudice Negro public opinion against the American Federation of Labor, so that the Brotherhood would be afraid to join the A. F. of L. This has been a very subtle and crafty policy of the Federation which all organizers should expose.

III NEW ORGANIZATION CAMPAIGN

(a) The Brotherhood shall embark upon an intensive, nation wide organization campaign for the purpose of bringing the 4000 porters and maids out of the Brotherhood into it.

PLAN:

(a) Each Brotherhood man should be given an application blank and required to get one new member or as many as possible. If each member of the Brotherhood got a member, the 4000 outstanding porters and maids would be organized practically over night.

(b) Each member should be required to get the names and addresses of as many porters who are not members of the Organization as possible. These porters could be waited on by some officials of the Brotherhood and shown the necessity of joining the Organization.

(c) A membership committee should be formed on which every member of the division should be placed. Meetings of this membership committee, with as many of them present as possible, should be held periodically.

(d) Certain prominent members of the Citizens Committee, if such committee is in your division, may be requested to use their influence on certain recalcitrant porters who are difficult to convince that they should join the movement.

(e) The Ladies Auxiliary should be employed also in the new organization drive. A committee in the auxiliary should be organized for the purpose of getting new members for the Brotherhood. Such committee may be able to bring effective pressure thru social relations upon the wives of Pullman porters who are not members of the Movement, thereby causing said wives to urge their husbands to join the Brotherhood.

(f) Find enclosed copy of letter from L. E. Sheppard, President of the Order of Railway Conductors. Copies of this letter should be made and shown to the train conductors on all the lines running out of your district. The said train conductors should be cultivated by key members of the Brotherhood and urged to ride the scabs. Most of the train conductors will be amenable to this program when once they see the interest of their president in our Movement. The train conductors should be told and given a list of all of the non-Brotherhood men on his train. This will be one of our best bets. The General Organizer will also request the President of the Conductors Union to instruct the various lodges of the conductors to cooperate with the Brotherhood in the above-mentioned manner.

MEETINGS:

(a) The Brotherhood should hold meetings daily or as often as possible. A meeting with two or three porters is necessary and valuable. Meetings should be held for new members and meetings should be held for the members by card admission only. Insist that only members with their 1928 cards will be admitted to the meetings for the members only. Meetings should be held also for delinquents, those who have not kept up their dues or paid their full initiation fees. Institute a social boycott by the members

of all scabs and delinquent members. This will help greatly in forcing the non-members into the Brotherhood and getting the delinquents to pay up.

Advantage should be taken of every opportunity to speak in meetings arranged by other groups. Public mass meetings should be held whenever convenient as we have two angles to our proposition; one the public, the other the porter. We must keep both informed and enthusiastic for the Brotherhood.

IV PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

(a) A bulletin will be mailed to the membership every week or every two weeks. The problems of the Brotherhood will be discussed therein. All organizers are requested to send in the news of their districts and to write the news in the most interesting form.

This bulletin will be used in addition to The Messenger as our propaganda material. We must reach the men now every week so as to keep their morale high. The bulletin will carry cartoons that dramatically put over our message. Organizers are requested to send in ideas for cartoons. The Organization will rest upon its morale alone. Morale is the result of propaganda. Our propaganda efforts must be constant and frequent. The Pullman Company cannot overcome us if we get our message to the men everywhere constantly. The distribution of bulletins hand by hand is ineffective. The direct mailing method will solve our problem of getting the matter to the men and the men will jump up as a result of an increased spirit. We will be hitting the Company four times a month on every vital question that arises. Although this will be expensive, it is worth the while because it will reflect itself in more lives. Each organizer can present a message to his division in the bulletin every week or two weeks as well as in The Messenger. We are going to develop an elaborate and effective cartoon service, for pictures are sometimes more effective than articles. It will be recalled when the cartoons were being carried constantly in The Messenger, the morale of the Organization was high.

RELEASE NEWS:

(a) All material for big stories will be sent organizers from New York on the same day story is released in New York so that the news value of the story in the local districts will not be killed.

(b) All organizers would constantly seek to invent and work up local material which may be interesting for a news story in the local press, white and colored.

(c) Effort should be made to get special writers in newspapers and magazines to write one or more historical stories of the porters' fight. It is more possible to get this done now than ever before.

V LABOR

(a) Organizers should cultivate the acquaintance of the local officers of the Central Labor Council of the American Federation of Labor, and also, the officers of the local unions and the internationals in your division. As result of the statement of Mr. William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, all of the local bodies as well as international bodies will be more sympathetic and favorable to the Brotherhood and more inclined to cooperate in every way.

(b) It would be advisable to make copies of William Green's telegram and send it to the various unions with a letter calling upon them to cooperate in furthering the cause of the Brotherhood. They may also be called upon to speak at our meetings from time to time.