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Chicago, III.

## The Fourth National Convention

of the

Workers (Communist) Party of America

Report of the Central Executive Committee to the 4th National Convention Held in Chicago, Illinois, August 21st to 30th, 1925

Resolutions of the Parity Commission and others.



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### Foreword

The Fourth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party was held in Chicago from August 21 to August 31, 1925. During the period of ten days the sixty-one delegates present debated the various questions of policy and tactics relating to the Party life and the development of a revolutionary movement of the workers against capitalism and the winning of the leadership of this movement by the Party.

This pamphlet contains the reports submitted to the convention and the resolutions adopted by it.

For a discussion of divisions which existed within the party and the development of its policies the reader is referred to the pamphlet "From the Third Through the Fourth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party" by C. E. Ruthenberg, the General Secretary of the Party. edominantly composed of poor farmers, organizations that the Workers Party ted front with the poor farmers for the may from the capitalists and the rich with the workers thru an alliance with

asis for our united front policies with re Party must first of all establish a al workers. We must organize branches scious agricultural workers. We must al workers, we must organize branches sclous agricultural workers. We must I. W. W. and other working class elestrengthening of unions of agricultural we shall penetrate the existing organization of crystallizing within them a ch eventually shall function independarmers and in alliance with the agri-

the carrying out of these policies is program of demands for the agricul-s. Also the establishment of a well-and an agrarian press.

actively support and fight for the orkers dealing with minimum wages, lood lodging, etc. The Workers Party Front action with the I. W. W. and a following demands:

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o maintain employment bureaus in interference with these employment Ku Kiux Klan, or any other capitalist inal offense and punished accordingly. of the state vagrancy laws in all tory workers by arrests, compulsion

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port by all possible means the pro-ational Peasants' Council and shall of American farmers' organizations

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The convention instructs the incoming Central Executive Committee to appoint a commission to study the agricultural question to propare a complete agrarian program.

(Adopted unanimously.)

#### THE AMERICAN NEGRO AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

The Negro in American History.

The Negro has played an important role in American history. First his labor transformed the southern wilderness into an empire. More than a score of heroic slave revolts enrich the forgotten pages of American history. The smoldering fire of slave reboillon was one of the immediate forces impelling the first centralization of the government of the capitalist republic—the adoption of the constitution and the formation of the national army.

From being a passive center of the blocdy struggle of 1861, the Negro was transformed in three short years into the black shock troops which helped to turn the tide of war against the southern oligarchy. Thus the Negro toiler played also his part in the consolidation of the capitalist republic.

solidation of the capitalist republic.

"Abolition," however, did not free the Negro laborer from all of the impediments of chattel slavory. The decade of "reconstruction" closed with a rapprochement between the Northern capitalist class and the defeated Southern landlords, who obtained a free hand to exploit the Negro masses to whom land was not allotted and who remained in a position of semi-slavery, politically disfranchised, victimized by super-exploitation and by exception laws.

Today the majority (shout \$8.000.000) of the Negro population

timized by super-exploitation and by exception laws.

Today the majority (about 8,000,000) of the Negro population consists of exploited farmers (mostly landless tenants) and agricultural laborers, and has a status little above serfdom. About one-third (4,000,000) of the Negro population are residents of cities, towns and industrial districts, where their occupations range from domestic and miscellaneous labor to industrial labor in the heavy industries. Practically without exception these are held by law and custom within the bounds of a labor caste, segregated, habitually terrorized, and exploited to a greater degree than any other section of the prole-tariat.

Nevertheless, unlike the Negro rural population, a large portion of this group, especially in northern industrial centers, has won the right to exercise the franchise. A number of them have come into the labor unions and consequently have been drawn directly into the general struggles of the American working class. From the Negro industrial workers the leadership of the American Negro mass movement must come.

The "Negro bourgeoisle" is but a petty-bourgeois section, small in number and of little significance as exploiters except insofar as they become agents of the big (white) beurgeoisie in the role of poisonous propagandists in reformist race movements or in capital-

ist political parties. With the latter exceptions the Negro petty-bourgeolsie itself as a whole suffers under racial persecution.

In chattel slavery the aspiration of the Negro was to attain the condition of "free labor"—the wage slavery of the white worker. The remaining special inabilities of the Negro—discrimination in employment, exclusion from trade unions, inequality of pay, cause great masses of Negro workers even today to regard the position of the white worker in industry as one which is still to be attained. This fact has caused much confusion and complication in the labor movement. It has created the basis of the false tradition that the Negro, even when drawn into industrial labor, is a "natural" ally and reserve of capitalism. In industry the fact that any degree of modern wage slavery has represented to the Negro an advance from his former serf-like status, taken in conjunction with the "labor-aristocratic" attitude of the trade union bureaucracy, has given birth to the false tradition that the Negro is a strike-breaker.

The basis of that tradition has been undermined in the tumultuous changes of the world war. The present is an epoch in which the industrialized Negro proletarian and also the agricultural proletariat, moves into a position with the general working class.

## The Negro Industrial Worker.

The Negro industrial Worker.

The tremendous transformation among the Negro masses resulting from the world war and after-war conditions, with the heavy migration of Negro agricultural laborers and tenant farmers into the cities and industrial districts, has pinced the Negro definitely in a new position in relation to the American labor movement. From being a sectional question, the Negro problem became a national question. From being a secondary factor in industrial labor, the Negro moves into position of a great mass employed in basic industries, and already in notable strikes in the coal fields, etc. he has shown himself eminently fitted for the front ranks of militant organized labor. The question of the full and unstinting adminsion of the Negro to the trade unions is placed more sharply than ever before at the door of the trade unions.

The constitutions of many of the trade unions exclude the Negro from the unions. In the case of these unions which have no such provisions in their constitution the Negro is nevertheless discriminated against.

inted against.

The increasing pressure of the Negro worker for admittance into the trade unions is an instrument for profound revolutionary change in the labor movement. It is no accident that the "Gompers" bureaucracy opposes the entry of the nowly industrialized Negro proletarians into the trade unions. As an important and growing part of the most exploited section of the proletariat which does not share in the nilserable bribes with which imperialism poisons the upper section of the working class, the mass of the Negro industrial workers is objectively and potentially a part of the left wing of the labor movement. In those unions into which the Negroes are being admitted, for instance the coal mining unions, the teamsters, longshoremen.

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building laborers, janitors, etc., the Negro plays an important part in strengthening the millitant section of the working class." The obstinate failure to organize the general mats of anaktiled proletarians, whose entry into the labor movement would serve as a further basis for proletarianizing the ideology of the trade unions and revitalizing the class struggle, is a part of the general service which the trade union bureaucracy contributes to its capitalist masters. And the failure to make a clean sweep of all obstacles to the Negroes' entry into the unions is an especially significant part of this service to capitalist reaction, for race prejudice of the white worker against the black worker is today more than ever a powerful weapon against the solidarity of the working class.

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black worker is today more than ever a powerful weapon against the solidarity of the working class.

The cause of the Negro in the labor movement in essentially a left wing fight and one which must energetically be championed by the Workers (Communist) Party. Our Party must make itself the foremost spokesman for the real abolition of all discrimination of the as yet largely unorganized Negro workers in the same unions with the white workers on the basis of equality of membership, equality of right to employment in all branches of work and equality of the communist fractions among the Negroes already in the unions, getting them to fight militantly for the abolition of the color line, and by the activity of the whole left wing forcing the abolition of all racial discrimination. Our Party must work among the unorganized Negro workers destroying whatever prejudice may exist against the trade unions, which is being cultivated by the white capitalists, the Negro petty-bourgeoisie, and the opposition of the reactionary bureaucracy as such, and must arouse them to demand and fight for admission. Our aim must be to show to the white workers that only by complete solidarity of the races can any progress be made by either and to show to the Negro workers that in spite of the anti-Negro character of some unions that in those unions where Negroes are admitted the racial question has been liquidated to the largest degree. Our demand is for the inclusion of the Negro workers in the existing unions, as against racial separation, as against dual unionism. Where Negroes are not permitted to join the eristing "white" trade unions, it is the duty of the Communists to take the initiative in the formation of organizations of Negro workers declaring in principle against dual unionism and against racial separation, and declaring as a primary purpose the struggle for admission into the existing unions, but functioning as full-fledged Negro unions during the struggle.

## The Negro Tenant-Farmer and Agricultural Worker.

Eight million Negro agricultural workers, share-croppers and tenant farmers live in the southern states in a condition in some respects resembling the sertdom of Europe two hundred years ago. Agricultural laborers are forcibly held in compulsory labor under corporal punishment. Tenant and share farmers are bound to the earth, by force prevented from leaving a locality where they are adjudged to

be in debt to landlords who exercise the rights of feudal masters. A racial caste system, remaining from the chattel slave period, sharply divides the exploited masses into black and white, thus facilitating the most cruel exploitation. Political rights are practically withheld from the Negro laborer and farmer.

It is the duty of our Party to take the initiative in organizing Negro agricultural workers into labor unions together with white agricultural workers it possible, but separately if unavoidable, and to bring such unions into the general labor movement. Another supremely important duty of the Party is to promote the organization of Negro tenant-farmers, share-croppers and small farmers generally (together with white farmers of the same exploited class it possible), and to bring such organizations into cooperation as allies of the labor movement.

## The Negro and the Labor Party.

The Negro and the Labor Party.

The task of the Communists among the Negro workers as elsewhere is in its first stage to bring about class consciousness and to crystallize this in independent class political action against the capitalist class. The profound social changes of the war and post-war periods have already shown indications of a partial exodus of Negro masses from the republican party; and this represents a bronk—ith tradition, a visible evidence of the beginning of the end of the alliance of the Negro with the capitalist class.

The labor party slogan and campaign possesses a peculiar usefulness in the work of bringing the Negro workers into the economic as well as the political labor movement. We shall advance the idea of the Negro workers taking an initiatory and leading part in the formation of the labor party. With this in view we shall in every labor party action prominently raise the issues of discrimination against the Negro politically, industrially, and in public customs. The disfranchisement of the Negro in the southern states must be made an especially urgent reason for the political organization of the Negro workers thru collective affiliation with the labor party; and the winning of political rights for the Negro proletarians must be placed before both white and Negro workers as an immediate objective of the labor party movement and a necessity for giving the workers' political movement its full strength.

## Negro Membership in the Communist Party.

It is absolutely essential that greater numbers of Negro workers capable of taking a leading part in the struggle be immediately drawn into the Workers (Communist) Party. In all of our party actions, all party units must make an especial effort to reach and enlist the most advanced Negro workers into our ranks. In order to meet our problems it is necessary to draw these commades into responsible party work. A great significance of our work among Negroes is that it will fucilitate the task of enlarging and establishing our Party in the southern states, which has become a prime necessity that can no longer be postponed.

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#### "Social Demands" of the Negrocs.

All slogans of equality which are current among the Negro masses, or which can be awakened among them, which express the aspirations for equal rights and equal treatment of Negroes in political and economic life and in public customs, are placed among the demands of the Workers (Communist) Party. Such are the demands for political equality, the right to vote, social equality, "economic" equality, abolition of jim-crow laws and also jim-crow customs not written into law, the right to serve on juries the abolition of segregation in schools and the right of Negro teachers to teach in all schools; equal rights of soldiers and satiors in army mad navy without segregation in colored regiments, the right to frequent all places of public resort without segregation (hotels, theaters, restaurants, etc.) and the abolition of all anti-intermarriage laws. In the course of the struggle with such demands we will demonstrate thru experience that these aspirations can be realized only as a result of the successful class struggle against capitalism and with the establishment of the rule of the working class in the Soviet form.

#### American Negro Labor Congress.

Our work among the Negroes centers now around the American Negro Labor Congress announced for Chicago. October 25. Our Party recognizes and supports this congress as a genuine expression of the Negro workers and farmers of the United States. It will be composed, according to the official call, of the following:

Delegates from Negro and mixed trade unions.

Delegates from Negro workers in factories and industries where large numbers of them are employed.

A few Negro workers who are known for their activity in behalf of the race.

Delegates from Negro farmer organizations.
Representatives of Negro semi-intellectual and semi-bourgeois organizations who are sympathetic to the movement of the workers

congress therefore will be basically a gathering of Negro

The congress therefore will be basically a gathering of Negro workers.

The slogans of our Party will be incorporated in resolutions and placed before the congress.

At the congress a permanent organization should be formed of groups thruout the United States composed predominantly of Negro workers belonging to unions where possible. In cities where this is not possible, the control of the committees should nevertheless be in the hands of actual workers.

In the agricultural communities similar committees composed of farmers and farm laborers should be formed.

The main object of the permanent organization should be to centralize the protests of the Negro workers and farmers, to stimulate the desire for organization, to secure admission to organizations of white workers and farmers on an equal basis and to establish

organic connection between the struggles of the Negro and white

masses.

The Congress should connect the struggles of the Negro workers and farmers in the United States with the struggles of the Negro colonials in American possessions such as Hafti, etc.

It should connect the struggles of the American Negroes with those of the African masses and finally with those of all colonial and semi-colonial neonles.

It should connect the struggles of the American Negrous with those of the African masses and finally with those of all colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

It should address a manifesto to the Negroes of the world calling upon them to hold a world race congress.

The congress should strive to develop a leadership for the Negro movement of the world for which the American Negroes, by their superior industrial and political training, are the best fitted.

Our party fractions will work for the above program.

In connection with the linking of the struggle of the American Negroes with those of their African comrades, the congress should point out the error of holding up Africa as a Negro Mecca. It must be made clear that the connection between the African and American Negro liberation movement is in the common struggle against world imperialism and that such schemes as migration, etc., are simply chimeras which serve only to confuse and conceal the real issues.

The congress should strive to develop a leadership for the Negro where a workers' and farmers' government has solved successfully all racial and national problems.

Lynching and Race Riots.

#### Lynching and Race Riots.

Lynching and Race Riots.

It is the duty of our Party to meet the problem of lynching and race riots not merely with words of sympathy but with concrete organizational methods which can be effectively applied. The essence of the problem is to create a united class front of the working class. We shall endeavor to have established in localities where both Negroes and white industrial workers are employed, permanent interracial labor committees against lynching, against terrorization of Negro and white workers, against the Ku Klux Klan, against inequality of pay, against race discrimination in obtaining employment for the full admission of Negro workers into the unions with equality of membership rights, for the complete organization of loth Negro and white-workers into the same unions. It shall be our endeavor to have such interracial committees of workers serve as a medium thru which the solidarity and cooperation of the working class and all workers' organizations can be obtained in times of crisis such as strikes, race riots, attempted lynchings, etc.. to prevent conflicts between the workers of the two races and to prevent lynchings.

## The Negro and the Army.

With the world war and the conscription of the Negro youth, resentment of discrimination and other brutal treatment in the army and navy became a major phenomenon among Negro toilers. Out of this mass conception arise many slogans and demands which the Workers (Communist) Party must energetically champion, and which

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discrimination against discrinthe sharp and ("24th Negro it against the pr Negro officers' tion, etc.

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especially the Young Workers League can well champion: the movement against segregation of Negroes in "jim-crow" regiments; against discrimination in the kinds of tasks assigned to Negro troop units; against discrimination against individual Negro soldiers; against the sharp and brutal punishment of whole groups of Negro troops ("24th Negro infantry" case—13 summarily hanged, 56 imprisoned); against the principle of "white officers for Negro troops"; against Negro officers' failure to defend the Negro troops from discrimination, etc.

against the principle of "white officers for Negro troops"; against Negro officers' failure to defend the Negro troops from discrimination, etc.

The customary employment of Negro troops in imperialistic aggression against weaker peoples (Spanish war, the Philippines, and Mexico in 1916), intensifies the duty of the Communists to awaken among the Negro masses a sense of their own relation to the class struggle in the United States, and their relation to the present world-awakening of the suppressed races; their relation to the new world-awakening of the suppressed races; their relation to the new world-awakening of the suppressed races; their relation to the short an understanding of the international role of capitalist government and their own role in the revolutionary epoch.

#### NEGRO RACE MOVEMENTS.

Partly as a result of the international transformation among the Negro population in the United States and the West Indies, and also partly as a reaction to the war and the national liberation movements thruout the world (especially the colonial ferment in Africa, Asia, the Philippines, Haiti, etc.), a Negro race movement centering in the United States has Jeen stimulated to large proportions. This movement first crystallized into organizational form among West Indian working class inmigrants in New York and other United States scaports as well as the British West Indian possessions, but spread rapidly among the mative American Negroes, mostly of the working class. Under the name of the Universal Negro Improvement Association a fluctuating membership, at times approaching the half-million mark, was organized. At first it showed distinctly anti-imperialist tendencies, with specific working class demands such as the demand for opening the trade unions to Negroes with equality of pay, etc., as shown in the 1920 program of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. At all times these demands have been confusedly mixed with Utopian conceptions. Rapidly, however, under the leadership of its principal founder, Marcus Garvey, the Utopian pacifist conception that the oppression of the Negro in America and the world could be remedied by the building of a national Negro state in Africa, and that honce the struggle in this country is unnecessary, has become the dominant note of the organization. The exploitation of the Negro masses by demagogic leaders of this organization, who copy the arts of the Jewish Zionist movement, soliciting funds from white capitalists on the ground that they will teach the Negro tollers to submit to "white supremacy" (i. e., capitalist appremacy) in this country, while officially denying but in fact cultivating the dream of mass migration to Africa, is one of the cruelest aspects of betrayal to which the black worker is subjected.

An intense sympathy with the colonial revolts of the Cirineae, the Rimans, Sudanese, East Indian, West Indian and Japan peoples against imperialism is, however, an almost universal phenomenon among American Negro workers. It exists in a militant, aggressive, non-pacifist form, not only among some of the rank and file of the beforementioned organization, but also widely beyond the limits of any organized form. This phenomenon is found in its highest development among Negro industrial workers who completely repudiate the cult of submission in America and who conceive their faie to be bound up with the American labor movement. This element of Negro industrial workers is exceptionally responsive to the Communite program in both its international and its domestic significance. Their interest in questions of colonial imperialism (forced upon them by their own persecution as an "inferior" race), increases the value of the contribution which this most exploited section of the proletarian Negro workers can make to the labor movement. The guidance of this current into the channel of the labor movement. The guidance of this current into the channel of the labor movement. The guidance of this current into the channel of the labor movement and away from Utopianism is a very high task of our Party. It involves the need of our Party members working within the Negro race movement, it involves the struggle for working cluss hegemony within the mass organizations of the race movement, including the struggle against the Utopian leaders—agents of the bourgeoisis. It involves combatting the ideology of concessions to "white supremacy," the insistence upon an uncompromising struggle against the Ku Klux Klan, making these major issues against the reactionary leadership. Within sach organizations we must insist upon the organizations taking up the issues of the class struggle, constantly pointing to the failure of the leaders to attempt to protect the Negro tollers from oppression in America.

America.

To accomplish this we should organize Communist fractions within the Universal Negro Improvement Association which shall strive to surround themselves with the working class and poor farmer elements for the purpose of carrying on the struggle to transform the organization into an organization fighting for the class interests of the Negro workers in the United States.

In the Negro race movements and organizations it is necessary constantly to emphasize the colonial program of the Communist International, pointing out that only with a united world front of all the exploited—only with the conjunction of the proletarian revolution with the revolt of the colonial peoples, that victory can be attained.

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We should encourage the Negro workers to take an interest in and support the movement for freedom of the suppressed colonial peoples. But it is not permissible to encourage the Utopian idea that the Negroes in this country can win their emancipation thru mass migration or thru the establishment of a Negro nation in Africa. The reformist leaders (Garvey, etc.) do not have a program for the liberation of the Negro peoples thruout the world. The revolutionary movement headed by the Communist International has a program which will liberate the peoples of Africa, Asia, etc., together with the proletariat of all countries. The Communist International and its

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#### OTHER NEGRO RACE MOVEMENTS.

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The African Blood Brotherhood, with a program of class struggle combined with a militant champloning of the special demands of the Negro workers against racial discrimination, is an organization which has done a pioneer work of considerable value, in organization which has done a pioneer work of considerable value, in organization militant advanceguard of Negro workers. Otherwise its chief successes have been in those cases when it has employed the united front tactics for enlarging its contact with and influence upon wider circles. Our policy in relation to this organization is to have the local organizations merge with the units of the American Negro Labor Congress.

In the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Negro petty-bourgeoiste, together with middle class white retormists and under the partial leadership of the big bourgooiste (such as represented by Senator Burton, chairman of the last republican national convention) finds the chief medium for its reformist operations. Yet it is a singular paradox and a reflection of the now passing period of the patronizing of the Negro's cause by the capitalist class, that this organization at its last convention appeared in the role of championing, the in a timid and "respectable" way, Negro workers' right to admittance in the trade unions. Even in this organization, under present circumstances, it is permissible and necessary for selected Communists (not the party membership as a whole) to enter its conventions and to make proposals calculated to enlighten the Negro massen under its influence as to the nature and necessity of the class struggle, the identity of their-exploiters, and their leaders in the same persons and the treacherous nature of the reformist measures proposed.

However it is only when the Communist work is so broadened and extended in the field of Negro movements as to make our Party stand out as the only real champion of the Negro gasinst lynching, all discriminating and all oppression and e

(Adopted unanimously.)