

St. Louis Convention of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights

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Article No. 2.

ST. LOUIS.—It is the unanimous verdict of the delegates to the anti-lynching convention of the American Negro Labor Congress (now the League of Struggle for Negro Rights) that history was made in this city during the past few days. It is a verdict that the imperialist oppressors of the Negro masses will be forced to concur in sooner or later.

The convention concretized the struggle of the Negro masses for unconditional equality, for the right of self-determination and by its decisions and its selection of the new name the League of Struggle for Negro Rights fully crystalized the idea that it is an organization of struggle and that struggle is for Negro rights from the very smallest fight against oppression and for all immediate demands of the Negro masses clear up to the ultimate liberation of the Negro masses, with state unity of the "Black Belt" and the right of the Negroes to decide their relationship to other governments with the right of separation from the bourgeois United States government if they so desire.

In a ringing manifesto to the Negro and white workers and poor farmers, the convention gave a bitter incident of American bourgeois democracy, pointing out that:

"In this so-called democratic United States, the citadel of capitalist civilization and culture, the white ruling classes carry out the most shameless and barbarous oppression of millions of Negro workers and farmers. Economically super-exploited, socially ostracized, in many places denied even the most elementary human rights, the Negroes are relegated to the lowest rungs of the social ladder and exist as a nation of "untouchable" or "social lepers," subjected to the most flagrant persecutions and abuses.

"It is an infamous lie perpetrated only by a government of slave drivers and their agents to maintain the yoke of slavery has been listed from the Negroes in these United States. The so-called "proclamation of emancipation" only signifies a formal abolition of slavery without removing its real basis—the monopoly of the land by the plantation owners of the South, a monopoly they still enjoy—after the civil war—with the connivance and support of the so-called friends of the Negroes, the northern capitalists.

The fact is that in the South millions of Negro workers and poor farmers are still in the position in many instances worse than chattel slavery."

The manifesto declares that the right of self-determination with confiscation of the land for the Negroes who work it is the only solution of lynching and Negro oppression and calls upon the white and Negro masses "to fight for the right of self-determination of the Negroes in the 'black belt' where they are the majority of the population by securing the land to the Negroes who work the land, by establishing the state unity of the Black Belt and by securing to the Negro majority the right and possibility of deciding its relations to other governments."

It calls for "the removal of all armed forces of the white ruling class from this territory—in the Black Belt." It declares that "in contradiction to the fallacy of the 'peaceful' return to Africa, this convention declares its determination to struggle for the unqualified rights of the Negroes in this country" and that further "in contradiction to the illusions spread by Garveyism, of revolutionary granting by the imperialists of freedom without struggle for the African masses, this convention supports the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the various African colonies against the imperialist robbers and for the establishment of independent native republics."

The manifesto points out to the Negro workers that they cannot free themselves by merely fleeing to the North. "The heritage of the plantations still cling to them in the northern industrial centers. The chains of the convict labor in the South extend to the cities and enshackle the Negro industrial worker. The Negro in the North cannot free himself as long as his brother remains a slave in the South."

It calls upon the white workers and poor farmers to support the struggles of the Negro masses, pointing out that "the interests of the great masses of white workers are diametrically opposed to any special oppression of any section of the working class. The existence of a section of workers specially exploited and oppressed is a constant threat to the living standards of the working class as a whole. The presence of cheap labor is a weapon with which the bosses are able to nullify all the economic gain of the

going to prevent the attack upon these workers? The same answer holds true in this industry as to all others where the A. F. of L. succeeded to mislead a small section of the workers. It helps the employers put through their program against the workers. They have agreed not to strike against wage cuts, speed-up, etc., they have adopted Hoover's stagger system (the Painters District Council No. 9) they fight against the unity of the employed and unemployed, against social insurance etc. In short they are doing everything the bosses want them to do. As a result of this disgust with the betrayals of their "leaders" thousands of workers are leaving the A. F. of L. unions, refusing to pay dues and the high assessments. But do these discontented workers willing to fight if leadership were provided, come in to our League in justifiable big numbers? No they do not, and this is due to the weakness of our League. Our League although an improvement is noticeable did not yet reach the great masses of discontented organized and especially the unorganized workers. The main weakness of the Building and Construction Workers Industrial League lies in the fact that it does not pay sufficient attention to the unorganized and unemployed workers.

The Building and Construction Workers Industrial League is confronted with the important tasks of organizing the unorganized as well as those still following the leadership of the fascists of the A. F. of L. for a counter attack against the employers and the fascist leadership, to tighten the independent leadership of the economic struggles, to build up genuine united fronts from below in the shops and on the buildings as the issues may come up with organized as well as unorganized workers. It is up to our League to bring the fight of the unemployed into the A. F. of L. unions and having them endorse their demands. And finally it is our task to win those rank and file workers, who still follow the treacherous leadership of the A. F. of L. to our program and into our League which alone will lead the workers into the struggle against the bosses and will build an industrial union

workers. The poisonous venom of race hatred injected into the ranks of the white workers becomes converted into an instrument for the destruction of working class solidarity, the only guarantee for successful struggles."

The manifesto was thunderously received by the convention and unanimously adopted. Both the delegates and the large number of spectators present were electrified with its militant demands, especially the demand for confiscation of the land of the Southern land-monopolists in the Black Belt for the Negro toilers who work the land and who today are shamelessly robbed and oppressed by the land owners.