Annual Conference

be ashamed, any of us, to confess our ignorance of the machinery of the American government and of the methods of its political life. Let us learn what voting means and for whom to vote and how to vote ourselves into free, modern, industrial democracy.

To the Cleveland Conference for Progressive Political Action Gentlemen:

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Fifteenth Annual Conference, speaking for a large portion of the thinking Negroes of America, takes this opportunity to lay before your Conference certain considerations touching the Negro race.

The political power of Negroes has greatly increased owing to the continuous migration of black working people from the disfranchising South to the industrial centers of the North.

Any political party which aims to attract the votes of Negroes today must first convince them of its determination and ability to forward their industrial and political and social emancipation.

This emancipation involves the same problems of labor and wage, of monopoly and privilege, of effective industrial democracy, which face all laboring classes the world over.

But the American Negro has in addition to these another and more subtle and more dangerous problem, that of discrimination against him within the very ranks of labor itself; discrimination to keep him out of the unions; discrimination in the unions after he has joined; discriminations of all sorts to deprive him of earning a decent livelihood.

It is this widespread and determined race discrimination that is alienating the Negro vote from the progressive liberal and labor vote, and is furnishing the capitalists free of charge not only cheap and increasingly efficient and non-union and union-hating labor, but also a large and growing vote in the main industrial centers of the country.

We appeal to the Cleveland Conference for Progressive Political Action to take such enlightened and far-sighted steps against race and color discrimination as will enable us to appeal to our people in behalf of the liberal and labor parties of the nation, without being faced by the present incontrovertible fact that these very persons are today greater enemies of our right to earn decent bread and butter than the captains of Monopoly and Privilege.

To the American Federation of Labor

For many years the American Negro has been demanding admittance to the ranks of union labor.

For many years your organizations have made public profession of your interest in Negro labor, of your desire to have it unionized, and of your hatred of the black "scab."

Notwithstanding this apparent surface agreement, Negro labor in the main is outside the ranks of organized labor, and the reason is first, that white union labor does not want black labor and secondly, black labor has ceased to beg admittance to union ranks because of its increasing value and efficiency outside the unions.

We thus face a crisis in interracial labor conditions; the continued and determined race prejudice of white labor, together with the limitation of immigration, is giving black labor tremendous advantage. The Negro is entering the ranks of semi-skilled and skilled labor and he is entering mainly as a "scab." He broke the great steel strike. He will soon be in a position to break any strike when he can gain economic advantage for himself.

On the other hand, intelligent Negroes know full well that a blow at organized labor is a blow at all labor; that black labor today profits by the blood and sweat of labor leaders in the past who have fought oppression and monopoly by organization. If there is built up in America a great black bloc of non-union laborers who have a right to hate unions, all laborers, black and white, eventually must suffer.

Is it not time, then, that black and white labor get together? Is it not time for white unions to stop bluffing and for black laborers to stop cutting off their noses to spite their faces?

We, therefore, propose that there be formed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Federation of Labor, the Railway Brotherhoods and any other bodies agreed upon, an Interracial Labor Commission.

We propose that this Commission undertake:

1. To find out the exact attitude and practice of national labor bodies and local unions toward Negroes and of Negro labor toward unions.

2. To organize systematic propaganda against racial discrimination on the basis of these facts at the labor meetings, in local assemblies and in local unions.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stands ready to take part in such a movement and hereby invites the cooperation of all organized labor. The Association hereby solemnly warns American laborers that unless some such step as this is taken and taken soon the position gained by organized labor in this country is threatened with irreparable loss.

Of this communication there has been merely a formal acknowledgment from the American Federation of Labor.

Members of the Committee on Resolutions were:

Harry E. Davis, Cleveland, Ohio, Chairman; Bishop John Hurst, Baltimore, Md.; Hugh O. Cook, Kansas City, Mo.; John C. Wright, Jacksonville, Fla.; W. A. Singfield, Little Rock, Ark.; T. G. Nutter, Charleston, W. Va.; Mrs. Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Wilmington, Del.; A. T. Atwater, Rome, Ga.; Dr. O. W. Langston, Indianapolis, Ind.; Dr. George E. Cannon, Jersey City, N. J.; Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, New York City; Dr. J. A. Cotton, Peoria, Ill.; Mrs. Maggie L. Walker, Richmond, Va.; Oscar H. McFarlin, Great Falls, Montana; Mrs. Caloreia Boone, Atlantic City, N. J.

Among the speakers at the Conference were: Hon. L. C. Dyer; Hon. Ira W. Jayne, Judge of the Wayne County (Michigan) Circuit Court; Hon. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor; Mrs.