
Summary of the Program and Aims of the African Blood Brotherhood (Formulated by 1920 Convention)†

Leaflet in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 1515, op. 1, d. 37, ll. 13-14.

- 1) A Liberated Race.
- 2) Absolute Race Equality — Political, Economic, Social.
- 3) The Fostering of Racial Self-Respect.
- 4) Organized and Uncompromising Opposition to the Ku Klux Klan.
- 5) A United Negro Front.
- 6) Industrial Development.
- 7) Higher Wages for Negro Labor, Shorter Hours, and Better Living Conditions.
- 8) Education.
- 9) Cooperation with the other Darker Peoples and with the Class-Conscious White Workers.

1) A Liberated Race — in the United States, Africa, and elsewhere. Liberated not merely from alien political rule, but also from the crushing weight of exploitation, which keeps the many in degrading poverty that the few may wallow in stolen wealth. The Negroes in the United States — both native and foreign born — are destined to play a vital part in a powerful world movement for Negro liberation. Just as the Negro in the United States can never hope to win genuine equality with his white neighbors under the system of exploitation, so, too, a free Africa is impossible until commercial exploitation is abolished. The ABB proposes (1) to develop and organize the political and economic strength of the Negro in the North for the purpose of eliminating peonage, disfranchisement, etc., in the South and raising the status of the Negro in that section of the country, and (2) to organize the

national strength of the entire Negro group in America for the purpose of extending moral and financial aid and, where necessary, leadership to our blood-brothers on the continent of Africa and in Haiti and the West Indies in their struggle against white capitalist exploitation.

2) Absolute Race Equality. In this question are inextricably bound the issues of Political Equality, Social Equality, and Economic Equality. Let one be denied and the whole principle of racial equality is denied.

3) The Fostering of Racial Self-Respect by the dissemination of the true facts concerning the Negro's contributions to modern civilization and the predominant party played in the ancient world by the African peoples.

4) Organized and Uncompromising Opposition to the Ku Klux Klan and all other movements or tendencies inimical to the true interests of the Negro masses. To effectively oppose the bigotry and prejudice of the Ku Klux Klan we must (a) organize the Negro masses; (b) create a strong Negro Federation out of the existing organizations that we may present a United Front; and (c) for the purpose of fighting the Klan ally ourselves with all groups opposed to its vicious activities, viz: the workers, particularly the Jewish workers and the Catholic workers, at whom, with the Negro, the Klan's activities are especially directed. As, for the purpose of throwing off our oppression,

†- According to Mark Solomon, a specialist in early 20th Century Black American radicalism, "There is no evidence that the ABB actually held a convention in 1920. At that point, it still characterized itself as a secret organization. If it did actually convene, the date remains unrecorded, but the formulation of the program most likely was in May or June 1920 and was designed for circulation at Marcus Garvey's UNIA convention that was to be held in August of that year." (Correspondence with Editor, April 2007.)

the enemies of the Imperialist system are our natural allies by virtue of being in the same camp and opposed to the same enemy, so the enemies of the Klan are our friends in that they fight the foe we fight. The Negro masses must get out of their minds the stupid idea that it is necessary for two groups to love each other before they can enter into an alliance against their common enemy. Not love or hatred, but **IDENTITY OF INTERESTS AT THE MOMENT**, dictates the tactics of practical people.

5) A United Negro Front with which to oppose the Ku Klux Klan and all other organizations and tendencies antagonistic to the Negro. This can be done only by bringing all Negro organizations into a Federation with a program to which any serious and intelligent Negro organization could subscribe. Their identity would not be lost. Their autonomy practically unimpaired. And the race organized and effective for the first time in its history.

6) Industrial Development along genuine cooperative lines whereby the benefits will be equally distributed among the masses participating, and not appropriated by a few big stockholders and dishonest and inefficient officials drawing exorbitant salaries. The ABB is sternly opposed to the foisting of individual and corporation enterprises upon mass movements for the reason that (a) such procedure is manifestly dishonest and misleading. Enterprises supported by mass movements should be of such a nature as to equally benefit everyone in the movement, not merely a handful of officials; (b) the ABB does not consider any commercial enterprise good enough to base the sacred Liberation Movement upon the mere chances of success or failure. No movement so based can long survive the collapse of its commercial enterprises. We believe in fostering and encouraging cooperative enterprises that will benefit the many rather than the few, but without basing the movement upon them.

7) Higher Wages for Negro Labor, Shorter Hours, and Better Living Conditions. To gain for

Negro Labor the full reward of its toil and to prevent exploitation either on the job or at the source of supplies we must encourage industrial unionism among our people and at the same time fight to break down the prejudice in the unions which is stimulated and encouraged by the employers. This prejudice is already meeting the attack of the radical and progressive element among white union men and must eventually give way before the united onslaught of Black and White Workers. Wherever it is found impossible to enter the existing labor unions, independent unions should be formed, that Negro labor be enabled to protect its interests.

8) Education. That "Knowledge is Power" was never more true than today when on every hand it is being demonstrated that races or groups advance by virtue of their acquirement of knowledge or lag behind because of their failure to overcome ignorance. The ABB proposes to send lecturers throughout America, establish forums, newspapers, etc., etc.

9) Cooperation with Other Darker Races and with the Class-Conscious White Workers. For the purpose of waging an effective struggle and weakening our enemies wherever possible, we must (a) establish fellowship and coordination of action within the darker masses and (b) between these masses and the truly class-conscious White Workers who seek the abolition of human exploitation.

The ABB submits the above summary of its program and aims, confident that it will receive the earnest attention of the race and that it will earn their active support.

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