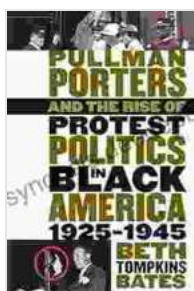


# Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945

In the early 20th century, the Pullman porter emerged as a pivotal figure in Black American society. These men, employed by the Pullman Company, provided services to passengers on railroads across the country. While their work was often demanding and low-paid, Pullman porters played a vital role in the development of Black protest politics.

## The Origins of Pullman Porters

The Pullman Company, founded in 1867, quickly became the dominant provider of railroad sleeping cars in the United States. As the company expanded, it hired large numbers of Black workers to serve as porters on its trains. By the early 1900s, there were over 10,000 Pullman porters working on railroads throughout the country.



## Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945 (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)

by Beth Tompkins Bates

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2376 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 302 pages



Pullman porters came from a variety of backgrounds. Many were former slaves or the sons of former slaves. Others had migrated to the North from the South in search of better opportunities. While they faced discrimination and prejudice on a regular basis, Pullman porters also found a sense of community and solidarity in their work.

## **The Importance of Pullman Porters**

Pullman porters played a crucial role in the development of Black protest politics. They were one of the first groups of Black workers to organize on a national level. In 1925, they formed the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), which was the first Black-led union in the United States.

The BSCP was led by A. Philip Randolph, a prominent civil rights leader. Randolph and the BSCP used collective bargaining to fight for better wages and working conditions for Pullman porters. They also played a key role in the fight against segregation and discrimination in the railroad industry.

In addition to their union activities, Pullman porters also played an important role in the broader Black protest movement. They were active in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other civil rights organizations. They also supported the Black Panther Party and other radical organizations.

## **The Decline of Pullman Porters**

The rise of air travel in the post-World War II era led to a decline in the demand for Pullman porters. By the 1960s, the BSCP had lost most of its members. However, the legacy of Pullman porters continues to live on. They were instrumental in the development of Black protest politics and their work helped to shape the civil rights movement.

Pullman porters were a pivotal figure in Black American society in the early 20th century. They played a vital role in the development of Black protest politics and their legacy continues to live on.

## **Pullman Porters: A Timeline**

\* 1867: The Pullman Company is founded. \* 1889: The first Black Pullman porter is hired. \* 1925: The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) is formed. \* 1937: The BSCP wins a major victory in a labor dispute with the Pullman Company. \* 1940: A. Philip Randolph leads the BSCP in a boycott of the Chicago World's Fair. \* 1941: President Franklin D. Roosevelt issues Executive Order 8802, which bans discrimination in defense industries. \* 1945: The BSCP wins a major victory in a labor dispute with the Pullman Company that results in higher wages and better working conditions for Pullman porters. \* 1960s: The demand for Pullman porters declines due to the rise of air travel. \* 1970s: The BSCP merges with the United Transportation Union.

## **Historical Images of Pullman Porters**

[Image of Pullman porter in uniform]

[Image of Pullman porters on a train]

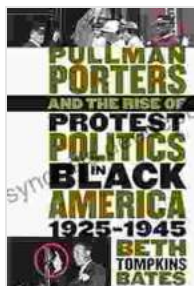
[Image of A. Philip Randolph leading a protest]

[Image of Pullman porters boycotting the Chicago World's Fair]

## **Further Reading**

\* A. Philip Randolph and the Pullman Porters: A Study in Black Labor History by Bernard Sternsher \* The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters:

Its History, Leadership, and Impact on the Civil Rights Movement by James A. Geschwender

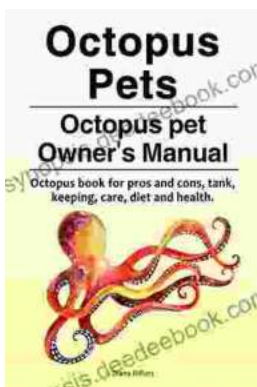


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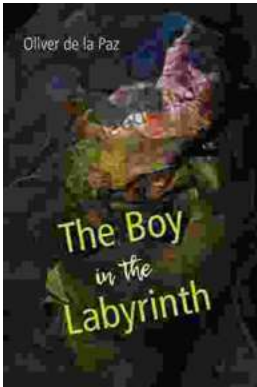
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