

The Power Station in Harlem; Negro Education in America Since the Civil War Days

By JAMES S. ALLEN

A new type of education for the Negro is to be formally instituted when the Workers' School opens in Harlem this fall. As among other peoples oppressed and forcibly retarded by imperialism, there is among the Negro people of the United States an intense desire and striving for education.

This education has been administered in partial doses for the most part directly by the white ruling class. The cry for equal and free public education was raised by the Negro people together with other demands in the period immediately following upon the Civil War. Hardly had chattel slavery been overthrown, when the Negro masses entered upon the struggle for a free school system equal to that enjoyed by the white masses, such as it was. For a time during the period of the revolutionary Reconstruction governments in the South, this demand was at least partially being realized. In a number of Southern states Negroes acted as superintendents of the state educational system, eloquent testimony to the fact that the Negro people were in the forefront of history, the principal driving force in the South against the old slave institutions.

Lost Few Gains In 1870's

With the desertion of the cause of the Negro people by the Northern ruling class in the 1870's, the Negro masses in the South were ensnared, and whatever rights they had won were taken away from them or abridged. Among these abridged rights was the right to public education. To this day in the South 30 per cent of the Negro children do not go to school at all, others only for a few months or a year. The school facilities are inferior, the teachers paid very little, and state appropriations for the jim-crow school system discriminate heavily against the Negroes.

In the North the Negro people have been able to participate, with certain limitations arising out of segregation, in the benefits of a school system dominated entirely by the white ruling class.

Past Negro Misleaders

Liberals and reformists generally like to point to the Negro schools as an example of the progress made by the Negroes since the Civil War. Booker T. Washington, who is generally hailed along with Frederick Douglass as one of the foremost of the earlier Negro leaders, founded his school at Tuskegee, Alabama, on the principle that the Negro would have to lift himself and make himself "equal to the white man" before he can hope for any equality. His whole philosophy was based on an acceptance of the lot of the Negro people and the theory of white superiority. He became famous, especially with the white ruling class, after his speech at the Cotton Exposition in Atlanta in 1876, in which he said, raising his hand with his fingers as far apart as they would go:

"In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers of this hand, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

Deeds of the Negro Bourgeoisie

Booker T. Washington is the spiritual father of the Negro upper class today, and his philosophy pervades the Negro colleges and schools. What this policy leads to is best shown by the incident at Tuskegee Institute during the struggle of the Tallapoosa croppers with the deputies and land owners last December, when a wounded Negro cropper who sought refuge at the institute was turned over to the Bourbon authorities to be killed in jail. The advancement that Tuskegee has been able to attain is demonstrated by the fact that the number of Negroes permitted to vote in that town can be counted on the fingers of one hand and that its graduates, as well equipped as whites in their particular field, must work as porters, janitors or scrub boys, if they find work at all. The same holds generally true for the other Negro institutions of higher learning. The present-day followers and step-children of Booker T. Washington, including those with a tinge of pink, like Schuyler, are bankrupt. For it is necessary, not to try to worm oneself into a comfortable hole in a rotten system, but strike at the very roots of that system until it is overthrown.

Now—Working Class Education

With the opening of the Workers' School in Harlem a beginning is made towards breaking the monopoly in Negro education of the white ruling class and the Negro reformists. Here the working class enters to administer its own education. It is education with a definite class purpose. There is nothing about it of meek acceptance of the rule of American imperialism. The servile prating of the so-called race leaders is replaced by a new, aggressive, self-assertive tone. The workers of Harlem come to this school not merely to be educated, but to be better equipped for the struggle for Negro liberation. The School is in a sense

an outgrowth of the Scottsboro movement and all it symbolizes. Just as in the movement to free the Scottsboro boys the working class rose to take the leadership, so in this movement for a useful education that will be of service to the liberation struggle, the working class also takes the lead. As in the Scottsboro movement, there will be many non-workers who have broken away from the domination of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Uncle DuBois, and wish to be re-educated in a revolutionary way.

This school can become the counterpart of Tuskegee, serving as a power station for the current of the class struggle. Its classrooms must produce men and women ready to play a leading role in the struggle for Negro liberation and working class freedom.

WHAT'S ON--

Wednesday

DR. STAMLER WILL LECTURE ON "THE CUBAN SITUATION" at 2700 Bronx Pk., East at 8:30 p.m.

DAILY WORKER ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT WILL CO-OPERATE WITH T. U. L. UNIONS, Mass Organizations and C. P. Units for the upbuilding of the DAILY WORKER. Ads help to support the 'Daily.' Send all information to Business Office, 50 E. 13th St. (8th floor), or telephone AL. 4-7955.

"1905" MOVIE SHOWING, Workers Center, 50 E. 13th St. Auspices Section 2, C.P. 50 per cent. Proceeds to Daily Worker.

WHAT IS THE NRA — Open Air Rally, Speakers, Robert Minor, Grace Hutchins, Alice Trepst at Intervale and Wilkins Aves. Auspices, Friends of the Soviet Union.

DAILY WORKER VOLUNTEER CHORUS is beginning the rehearsals at 35 E. 12th St. Workers and students are invited and asked to bring their friends with them.

ALL GREETINGS FOR THE PARTY ANNIVERSARY EDITION SHOULD BE SENT TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE OF THE DAILY WORKER IMMEDIATELY.

REGISTRATION NOW ON FOR THE WORKERS' SCHOOL, Fall Term. Office: 35 E. 12th St., Room 301.

Thursday

SYMPOSIUM—"THE COMING WAR." Speakers: A. J. Muste, Dr. S. Leroy, Paradise Manor, 11 W. Mt. Eden Ave., at 8:15 p.m. Mt. Eden Branch F. S. U.

SACCO-VANZETTI BRANCH I. L. D. general meeting at 792 E. Tremont Ave. Elections of Executive Committee. Discussions on the Three Months' Plan and N. R. A. All invited.

ATTENTION Y.C.L.

All Section Young Worker and Literature Directors and Agitprops, very important meeting Thursday, September 14, 1933 at the District Office at 8 p.m.

LAST DAYS—2 SO

The DAILY WORKER says:—"To see the a spectator, a witness—more, a participant in the struggle of the Baku workers—no worker should fail to see."

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