



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: The Negro Worker Vol. 2 No. 7

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Against Illusions in the West Indian Masses

By Charles Alexander. (Trinidad).

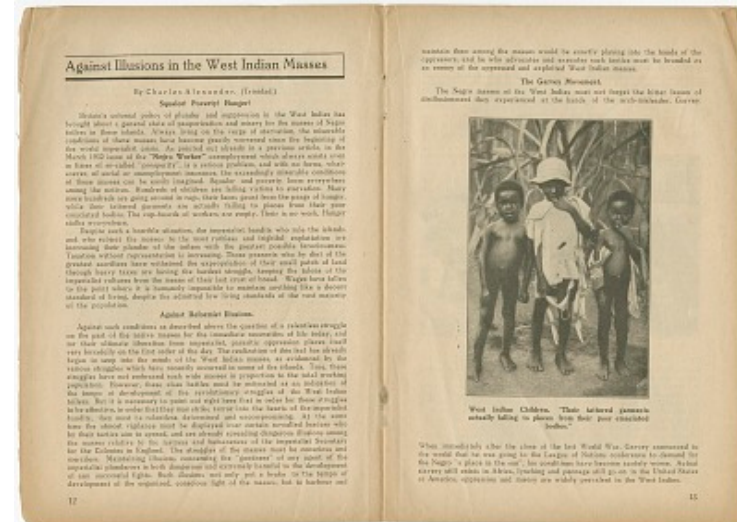
Squalor! Poverty! Hunger!

Britain's colonial policy of plunder and suppression in the West Indies has brought about a general state of pauperization and misery for the masses of Negro toilers in these islands. Always living on the verge of starvation, the miserable conditions of these masses have become greatly worsened since the beginning of the world imperialist crisis. As pointed out already in a previous article, in the March 1932 issue of the "Negro Worker" unemployment which always exists even in times of so-called "prosperity", is a serious problem, and with no forms, whatsoever, of social or unemployment insurance, the exceedingly miserable conditions of these masses can be easily imagined. Squalor and poverty loom everywhere among the natives. Hundreds of children are falling victims to starvation. Many more hundreds are going around in rags, their faces gaunt from the pangs of hunger, while their tattered garments are actually falling to pieces from their poor emaciated bodies. The cup-boards of workers are empty. Their is no work. Hunger stalks everywhere.

Despite such a horrible situation, the imperialist bandits who rule the islands, and who subject the masses to the most ruthless and frightful exploitation are increasing their plunder of the toilers with the greatest possible ferociousness. Taxation without representation is increasing. Those peasants who by dint of the greatest sacrifices have withstood the expropriation of their small patch of land through heavy taxes are having the hardest struggle, keeping the talons of the imperialist vultures from the means of their last crust of bread. Wages have fallen to the point where it is humanely impossible to maintain anything like a decent standard of living, despite the admitted low living standards of the vast majority of the population.

Against Reformist Illusions.

Against such conditions as described above the question of a relentless struggle on the part of the native masses for the immediate necessities of life today, and for their ultimate liberation from imperialist, parasitic oppression places itself very forcefully on the first order of the day. The realization of this fact has already begun to seep into the minds of the West Indian masses, as evidenced by the various struggles which have recently occurred in some of the islands. True, these struggles have not embraced such wide masses in proportion to the total working population. However, these class battles must be estimated as an indication of the tempo of development of the revolutionary struggles of the West Indian toilers. But it is necessary to point out right here that in order for these struggles to be effective, in order that they may strike terror into the hearts of the imperialist bandits, they must be relentless, determined and uncompromising. At the same time the utmost vigilance must be displayed over certain so-called leaders who by their tactics aim to spread, and are already spreading dangerous illusions among the masses relative to the justness and humaneness of the imperialist Secretary for the Colonies in England. The struggles of the masses must be conscious and merciless. Maintaining illusions concerning the "goodness" of any agent of the imperialist plunderers is both dangerous and extremely harmful to the development of any successful fights.



Such illusions not only put a brake to the tempo of development of the organized, conscious light of the masses, but to harbour and

12

maintain them among the masses would be exactly playing into the hands of the oppressors, and he who advocates and executes such tactics must be branded as an enemy of the oppressed and exploited West Indian masses.

The Garvey Movement.

The Negro masses of the West Indies must not forget the bitter lesson of disillusionment they experienced at the hands of the arch-misleader, Garvey.

[[image]]
[[caption]] West Indian Children. "Their tattered garments actually falling to pieces from their poor emaciated bodies." [[/caption]]

When immediately after the close of the last World War, Garvey announced to the world that he was going to the League of Nations conference to demand for the Negro "a place in the sun", his conditions have become acutely worse. Actual slavery still exists in Africa, lynching and peonage still go on in the United States of America, oppression and misery are widely prevalent in the West Indies.

13

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