

NEGRO HARLEM'S UNEMPLOYED
by
Frank R. Crosswaith

NEGRO HARLEM IS at present engaged in raising a fund of \$100,000.00 to provide for relief among its unemployed. A recent estimate places the number of jobless workers here at more than 30,000. A part of this huge fund will be devoted to welfare work among the thousands of ill-nourished and poorly-clad children of the community. Over 2000 men, women and children now daily take their turn in Harlem's breadline, while social service organizations claim that more than 200 families are without heat and light in the city that politicians call "The blackman's paradise".

THE PUBLIC SPIRITED MEN AND WOMEN who, in the midst of the present economic and industrial crisis, recognize their duty to the unfortunate Negro worker cruelly separated from his job through no fault of his own, and are seeking as best they know how to render him some useful service in his hour of stress and travail, are deserving of much praise and admiration. Whether or not these "good Samaritans" fully realize the magnitude and seriousness of the task before them, I do not know. However this I do know, at "the end of the row" disappointment and disillusion await them.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS A CANCER upon the body of our social organism. Neither white nor black victims of it can affect a cure independent of the other. It is impossible to isolate and destroy the germ of unemployment by an application of "relief salve" along racial or any other lines. A major operation upon our industrial and economic system offers the only sure cure for unemployment. However, at present only a minority of the people recognize this fact and diligently they are seeking through education, agitation and organization to enlighten their fellows to a realization of this principle.

THE MAJORITY WHO BELIEVE that the situation calls only for "relief" measures and "social patch-work" ought not to be denounced and condemned; they are rather to be admired and pitied. They are unable to delve beneath the surface and find the root of the evil they seek to assuage. That they do not understand is evidenced by the zeal and devotion they manifest in trying to relieve the situation.

THE COMMITTEE which is raising in Harlem this \$100,000.00 relief fund will make a canvass of Harlem with a view toward securing from each employed or salaried person a contribution of not less than one percent of his or her weekly income. In other words, from the employed worker will be taken a portion of his already too inadequate income to aid the unemployed. By so doing, unwittingly the Committee will be contributing toward the eventual poverty and unemployment of those workers who now are employed. It is like breaking the door of your home to patch the windows. The house remains as unsafe as before.

IT SEEMS TO ME that by far a better and just arrangement would be to organize the tenants and conduct a fight for a radical reduction in the prevailing high rents in Harlem; second, to organize

the consumers to fight for a reduction in commodity prices; and third, to establish genuine cooperatives. In all of these worthy efforts the churches and fraternal organizations can play a most useful part. While these efforts will not in themselves solve for the Negro his unemployment problem, they will strengthen his economic life-line and can serve as the bases from which will eventually rise the solution to his problems.

A TENANTS' LEAGUE, A GENUINE CONSUMERS COOPERATIVE AND AN INDUSTRIAL WORKERS' UNION among Negroes not only in Harlem, but wherever they find themselves in a segregated position, will bring to the masses untold benefits, and in time will become a part of the machinery of education in the campaign for social, economic and political justice. Under the circumstances there is no more effective way to attack unemployment. There is no better time to begin the attack than now.

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CROSSWAITH IN ORGANIZATION CAMPAIGNS

CHICAGO--Frank R. Crosswaith, Negro orator and labor organizer, will be available for speeches and trade union work in the western states after March 28.

Mr. Crosswaith is just completing a trip on behalf of the Negro worker in Pennsylvania, and he has been engaged for organization campaigns in Cleveland, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In each of these cities he will spend at least a week working among Negroes for the labor movement. He founded the Trade Union Committee for Organizing Negro Workers in 1925, and he has been active in organization work with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the Elevator Operators, Mechanics, Barbers, Laundry Workers, Motion Picture Operators, and other trade union groups.

Organizations desiring to secure the service of Mr. Crosswaith for a single lecture, or for a longer organizing campaign, should address the Social Problems Lecture Bureau, 2653 Washington Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

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The estimated cost of the American occupation of Haiti up to the present time is \$21,000,000.

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