

Out-of-Date Tactic

By Doxey Wilkerson

The recent widely-publicized, red-baiting attacks upon the George Washington Carver School represent not only the unprincipled slander of a vital young institution which has come already to mean a great deal to the people of Harlem; they also represent a curious, but impotent, reversion to the disruptive tactics of an earlier period in our political history.



It is clear that the real purpose of the Walter White-A. Philip Randolph-combined newspaper attacks is not merely to disrupt the Carver School. Their more basic purpose is to manufacture an "incident" which can be used in an effort to counter-act the growing appreciation and warmth of the Negro people for the policies and program of the Communist Party.

The timing of the attacks is significant. Although the aims, program and personnel of the Carver School have received wide publicity since the initial announcement last February, and although the School has been in actual operation since October, it was not until after the election of Benjamin Davis to the City Council that the false issue of "Communist control" was raised. It happens that Mr. Davis, a Communist, is one member of the School's widely representative Board of Directors.

This tie-up is even more direct. Incident to last week's attacks upon the Carver School, Walter White deplored the growing influence of the Communist Party among Negroes, and A. Philip Randolph cited

the election of Benjamin Davis as illustrative of how the Communists are backing Negroes in politics. (N. Y. Times, Dec. 21 and 22.) The more general purpose of these attacks upon the School is here made quite clear.

What is the character of this school which the White-Randolph-newspaper combine seeks to disrupt?

The Carver School is an adult education institution which offers popular courses to the people of Harlem, without the academic restrictions of "entrance requirements." Its broad program of studies includes courses and workshops in American history, Negro history, art, music, literature, anthropology, English composition, health, consumer education, race relations and the labor movement.

Even after the resignation of several Board members, who seem to have been thoroughly "worked on" by disruptive outsiders, the School's governing body is still broadly representative of the Harlem community. Among its directors are teachers, ministers, leaders of major social agencies, physicians, and representatives of other organizations—including a Communist member of the New York City Council. Special tribute is due the still remaining white members who refused to go along with efforts to disrupt the wholesome inter-racial unity which finds expression in the Carver School's governing board.

As the responses of students clearly show, and as last week's unanimous declaration by the Board of Directors states, the Carver School is a non-partisan "people's university," serving a real need, representing a true cross-section of the community, and responsible to the people of Harlem, to whom it

will make periodic reports. This is the school the red-baiters now seek to disrupt.

What is the character of this "Communist influence" from which the White - Randolph - newspaper combine seeks to shield the Negro people?

It is charged that the Communists are making an "unashamed" effort "to spread their doctrines among Negroes." The "charge" is, of course, entirely correct.

With equal truth the heads of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters might also "charge" that the Communists are waging an "unashamed" campaign to up - root every vestige of jim crowism from our national life, that they consider the establishment of full citizenship rights for the Negro people as an urgent wartime necessity of the nation as a whole. This program is what draws increasing numbers of Negroes to the Communist Party. Are these the "doctrines" to which White and Randolph object?

The attacks upon the Carver School will fail, because this non-partisan institution serves a real need which the people of Harlem are coming increasingly to appreciate. They will give it their continued support.

The attacks upon the Communist Party's program for full Negro rights NOW, as a necessary means to victory and a just peace, will also fail, because this program now reflects the basic wartime interests of the nation as a whole. In the furtherance of this program, increasing thousands of white and Negro Americans will come to find the highest expression of their social and patriotic ideals.