

# Southern States Eliminate U.S. Constitution from School Textbooks, says Dr. Woodson

The Fear is that Children May Learn of their Rights and Contend for them. Principal of School Ousted Because He Talked of Voting. Hoover Got Rid of Colored G.O.P. Leaders in Dixie Because they Were More Expensive than Lily-Whites. Tuskegee Anniversary Speech Designed to Change Criticism of G.O.P. Educators Left Schools to Work in Last Political Campaign Only to be Ignored Later.

By DR. CARTER G. WOODSON  
Director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History

Sometime ago when Oscar DePriest was distributing by thousands, copies of the Constitution of the United States, certain wisecracks were disposed to make fun of it. These critics, however, probably did not realize the fact that thousands and thousands of colored children in this country are not permitted to use school books in which are printed the Constitution of the United States.

Not long ago a measure was introduced in a certain State Legislature to have the constitution thus printed in school histories, but when the measure was about to pass it was killed by some one who made the point that it would never do to have Negroes study the Constitution of the United States. If the Negroes read the Constitution of the United States they may learn to contend for the rights therein guaranteed, and no Negro teacher who gives attention to such matters of the government is tolerated in most of these backward districts.

### Principal Fired

A few years ago a rather youthful looking high school principal in one of the large cities was unceremoniously dismissed because he said jokingly to the president of the board of education, in reply to his remark about his youthful bearing, that the former was old enough to vote. "Horrors!" said the infuriated official. "Put him out. We brought him here to teach these Negroes how to work and here he is thinking about voting."

In certain parts, therefore, the Negroes under such terrorism, have ceased to think of political matters as a concern of the race. Where such things come into the teaching in more advanced work they are presented as matters of concern to a particular race rather than as functions in which all citizens may participate. The result is we grow up practically without political education.

### Only 2,000 Vote

In some cases to prevent the Negroes from learning too much about these things the whites in the schools are neglected also, but the latter have the opportunity to learn by contact, close observation, and actual participation in the affairs of government. Negroes in the South have all but abandoned voting even at points where it might be allowed. In some cases not as many as 2,000 Negroes vote in a whole state.

The effect of such a one-sided system is decidedly bad. You do not realize it until you talk with men and women of these districts, who, because of the denial of these privileges have lost interest in political matters. You meet teachers, physicians, and ministers who do not know the ordinary operations of courts, the functions of the counsel, jury or judge, unless such knowledge has come by the bitter experience of having been imposed upon by one of these tribunals of injustice. Some of these leading colored folk do not pay attention to such important matters as the assessment of property and the collection of taxes and do not inform themselves as to how these things are worked out.

### Whites Profit Temporarily

The elimination of the Negro from politics in the undoing of the reconstruction, then, was most unfortunate. The whites may have profited temporarily, but they showed very little foresight. How the whites can expect to make of the Negroes better citizens by leading them to think that they should have no part in the government of this country is to me a mystery.

To keep a man above vagabondage and crime he needs among other things the stimulus of patriotism, but how can a man be patriotic when the effect of his education is to the contrary?

### Corruption

What little interest there is in politics remaining among us in most parts of the South is unfortunately restricted to corruption. The usual stir about electing delegates to the National Republican Convention from the Southern States and the customary combat the Negroes have with Lily-white corruptionists are about all that claim their attention in the Lower South.

Neither the white nor the black faction as a rule makes any effort to restore suffrage to Negroes. The objective is merely the control of delegates and Federal patronage. To do this you hear of numerous contests culminating in closing hotels and bolting doors for secret meetings to take advantage of each other. Large numbers of persons however, become ex-

cited over the contest and give much publicity to it as a matter of importance when the methods of these corruptionists of both races should be condemned.

### How Presidents Perform

Talking with a representative of the Republican machine recently, I learned from him that when the President is seeking renomination, which is usually an easy matter through the control of patronage, the cost of the campaign for Southern rotten-borough delegates is not very high.

When it is a free-for-all contest, however, each delegate from such states costs about a thousand dollars. This would mean an outlay of about one-hundred and fifty thousand for the entire South. In case the Negroes hold their own against the Lily-whites in three States which they have heretofore controlled, the Negroes get about forty thousand of this bribe money.

### Negroes More Expensive

I asked this gentleman why the Republican machine has been trying to get rid of Negro politicians by sending them to the penitentiary for selling Federal positions when the Lily-whites do the same.

He explained the matter by saying that the Negro delegates are more expensive, because they do not always stay bought after they have been given their thousand dollars or so a head, and when in control of patronage they sell the positions so high that it results in reaction against the system and an unwelcome exposure.

The colored grafters, however, were not considered as men of lower character than the Lily-white. The higher price exacted by the Negro politicians, he says, is due to the fact that the Negroes as a rule can not be appointed to office in the South because of race prejudice, and they must figure on getting all of theirs by "graft." The Lily-whites may hold office even after working the machine for all of the "graft" possible.

### Disgrace to the Race

If this is the extent to which such Negroes can figure in politics all respectable citizens must long for the day when this condition of affairs will cease to be. These Negro corruptionists are a disgrace to the race and should be so branded as such by all persons who believe in decency and self-respect.

We were all worked up over Parker's nomination for the Supreme Court of the United States because he said that the Negro is not prepared to discharge the functions of citizenship, but we must admit that with respect to these particular corruptionists, whom we keep in the limelight and wine and dine, Parker was right; and the Negroes of this country will never be recognized as citizens until they learn to exile men of this ilk. The white race has so many other things to its credit that it can afford a few of such "grafters," but we have more than our share of them.

### Get into the Mire

Instead of doing something to get rid of this ilk, however, we find the highly educated trying to get into the mire also. One of the most discouraging aspects which I have recently observed was that of the last presidential campaign.

Three prominent men connected with three of our leading institutions of learning temporarily abandoned their work to round up votes for Hoover; and when he had been elected he carefully ignored them in the makeup of the personnel of his administration and treated Negroes in general with contempt. After trying unsuccessfully to build up a Lily-white party in the South and to force Parker into the Supreme Court the Republican machine saw that it was losing its hold on other sections and finally deemed it advisable to do a little something to keep colored folk in line.

The machine knew that it could be easily done. One colored man from West Virginia was put out of a Federal position to give place to another from Delaware, one from West Virginia was sent to suffer in Liberia, two special assistantships of precarious tenure were made available, a gesture was made to relieve Haiti, Hoover made a speech on the Negro at Tuskegee, which could have easily been taken from Monroe N. Work's "Yearbook," and a number of us were invited to the all-problem-solving conferences and had the opportunity to run our cuts and special releases in the newspapers.

### Charge to Praise

Every thing with the Negro, then, began to go well. Criticism of the Republican party among Negroes rapidly changed to praise, our newspapers began to laud Hoover, and almost two years prior to the next presidential

election the white bosses effected a national organization of the Negroes to hold their vote in cold storage for Hoover in the next campaign.

When you think of the fact that the men who are being thus used are supposedly our reputable leaders and our most highly educated men, you have to wonder whether we have made any progress since emancipation. The only consolation one can get out of it is that they do not represent the whole race. All American Negroes are not fools.

### Imbeciles

Unfortunately, however, the white political bosses with whom they deal believe that these imbeciles actually represent the Negro race for these men of the other race do not come into contact with the large body of self-respecting colored folk and therefore treat the whole race with the contempt that these morons deserve. The better element stay out of such politics and thus leave the field wide open for the spineless, job-seeking empty-honor-hunting bread-and-butter politicians who have disgraced us in the United States.

### Divide Vote

We should participate in politics, but we should divide our vote as we are learning to do in Maryland, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, and as we have been doing for a long time in New York and Chicago.

As a result of this saner policy of our voters in those parts we have such outstanding developments as the election of judges in both of these

## Gossip of the Movie Lots

Stepin Fetchit and Mate to Have it Reno-vated. "To Hell with Hollywood" New Book Out.

HOLLYWOOD, Cal.—(ANP)—This week's excitement is partly centered around Stepin Fetchit's impending divorce which is sure to take place, according to an alleged public statement made by his pretty girl wife, Dorothy. She claims that he went to her home, 738 North Alvarado, and took their baby, Jimajo, away with him and has since remained in hiding.

The other occurrence that has startled movie circles is the fact that at last Helen Lee Worthington, beautiful white Pollie star and movie actress, has filed suit for divorce from her colored husband, the handsome, widely known Dr. Eugene Nelson. They have agreed upon a property settlement.

The marriage, called by white dailies a perfect love romance, took place in 1927 at Tia Juana, and, although they separated a while last year, she always declared that she loved him dearly. Many of her

friends advised her against spoiling a career in the movies by marrying him, but she was determined to follow her own mind and heart.

The formal petition came as a surprise to all. The couple had been together frequently of late. This Movie Gossip met them at the Olympic Arena recently, where they attended the fights regularly. They always seemed a loving couple, very attentive to each other. During the palmy days of their marriage the doctor employed a chauffeur to drive her.

Remember the old quotation?  
"For east is east, and west is west,  
And never the twain shall meet."

### New Book

"To Hell with Hollywood" is the name of a new book just out. One of the studios has taken an option on it for a picture, although it does give Hollywood the very devil.

The studios grab new, startling stories before the ink gets dry.

### Another Fetchit Picture

Stepin Fetchit is to make another picture after all. M. H. Hoffman, Jr., signed him to work with the famous Hoot Gibson in his next picture, a Peter B. Kyne story, "Wild Horsemans." It is a Cosmopolitan Magazine story and the best he has done for a long time. Gibson made his last picture at Tech-Art Studio. This one will probably be made there also. Dick Thorpe, live young director, who made "Thoroughbred" at Tiffany's, will direct.

### Won N.C. Music Contest

HICKORY, N.C.—Miss Mary Lee Shuford senior at Ridgeview High School, won first place among the soprano solos at the North Carolina High School State-wide Music Contest held at Hillsdale Park High School, Durham, April 30.

## WORDS OF PRAISE FROM WOMEN WHO REALLY KNOW



Mrs. Edna Thomas, of New York City, was one of the prominent members of the cast of "Porgy." She is a frequent guest of Princess Eugenia Murat at her chateau in Paris, France.

"It certainly keeps my skin light, lovely and fine" Says Mrs. Edna Thomas, prominent actress in the world-famous play, "Porgy"

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