

Islam in Tuskegee

By Anna Karriem

The classroom is the field wherein the mind of a student is cultivated. Independent thought is an entity of the educational process if it is rightly taught and cultivated in the student. The most learned scholars are those who have been able to take the basic factual principles and deductively reason from them once they have proven that the principles are true. Tuskegee Institute is a predominantly Black Institution which houses approximately 3,000 Black students. The school is situated on 5,189 acres of land. Less than half of this land is presently being used. If we reason deductively and historically, it would be logical to state that in every war that America has fought, land has always been the chief reason for her imperialistic moves. All of the land she usurped belonged to the Black Man in the beginning. However, America has always waited until the owner of the land reached a level of achievement from which she could benefit before taking the land. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that the Black Man is the Original Man and the Owner of the planet Earth. Why shouldn't he own that which he walked on first? When you own your own property, you act and live independent of an overseer if you have the knowledge of how to keep yourself independent.

TUSKEGEE Institute has on its grounds modern facilities to train Black students in the various fields of engineering, medicine, agriculture, nursing and the mechanical building arts. Yet, the element of

independent thought and initiative have not entered into the education of the Black students in these fields. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that no nation can be successful unless it has a knowledge of engineering. When an engineering student is trained at Tuskegee Institute the foremost goal that is held before him is the great need that private contractors, corporations, and governments have for qualified engineers. Never, is the student taught to study and build for himself and his Black Nation because this would prevent white recruiters from coming to campus seeking these Black engineers.

Every skill that the Black Nation of America needs to pull itself out from under the white man's rule is being taught on this campus. However, independent thinking is never mentioned in the classrooms. With the necessary land and trained Black people cultivating it, why isn't Tuskegee Institute more productive? I will tell you why. The school is growing

more successful each year. At a recent 1969 Board of Trustees meeting to which I was asked to go and represent the Department of Education along with students who represented eight other departments, the board chairman began telling us of how hard it was to raise money to build on the campus. One of the student members of the meeting, who had attended many of the meetings in which the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad had been conveyed, suggested the institute administration, students and Alumni combine efforts to build a lucrative business on the land area of the school with the purpose of making Tuskegee Institute self sufficient. The white board members immediately denounced the idea and said the school did not have enough capital for such an endeavor.

ALL OF THE students agreed to build this business but there was no agreement between us and the board members as well as our Black President, Dr. Luther Foster. One month later, I witnessed a meeting between representatives of several Alabama industries and Institute administrators as well as those of us who were student members of the educational council. In the meeting, school officials were consenting to these representatives' bringing their industries to Tuskegee Institute and building on and around the school property. This is why Tuskegee Institute is not as productive as it could be. The knowledge of the white man's history is not known by

the leaders of the Institute and they foolishly rejected Messenger Muhammad's invitation to teach them and build the school up to a superior level. The white man sees a future for himself in the Institute. Surely this should awaken the so-called Black leaders of Tuskegee Institute. The students there who believe in the teachings of Messenger Muhammad will make you mindful of this.

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