

Toward Freedom

WHEN interviewed recently by the N. Y. Herald Tribune (Aug. 12), Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, eminent Howard University sociologist, emphasized that "the fate of the Negro in American society is tied up with the fate of all American society."

This is a fundamental truth which Negro Americans would do well to ponder deeply. It is no less urgent that white Americans come quickly to realize that the converse of this premise is also true, that the fate of America as a whole may be determined decisively by the relations of the Negro people to the nation in the period immediately ahead.

Said Dr. Frazier, in discussing postwar perspectives:

"If the leaders of America will acknowledge that a tremendous revolution is taking place, that social planning is necessary, that full employment is necessary, then the Negro will benefit. But if we have a depression or inflation, it is possible that the Negro will be made the scapegoat, be thrown out of jobs, and that competition between white and Negroes will be set up, defined in racial terms."

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NO BETTER current illustration of this general truth is to be found than in the congressional struggle for progressive reconversion legislation. The breadline, apple-selling, back-to-Hooverism-through-Dewey boys, despite certain concessions to progress, were



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the victors in the Senate contest over the George and the Kilgore-Murray-Truman bills. If they triumph also in the House, and if their damage to postwar America is not subsequently repaired, then the masses of Americans are in for hard sledding and the Negro people face an extremely serious future.

The immediate effect of inadequate reconversion legislation and consequent mass unemployment would be to throw Negroes out of their new wartime jobs and to deny them, especially in the South, any program of unemployment insurance benefits commensurate with decent living. But abject poverty and attendant illness would not be all. A postwar situation of sharp competition for jobs would tremendously enhance the virulent growth of anti-Negroism. A resurgence of riots, lynchings and probable total destruction of the Negro's wartime social and political gains would be a realistic expectation.

No better illustration of this fact is to be found than in the recent Philadelphia transit strike. The anti-Negroism which we have allowed to plute our culture was there used an effort to destroy legitimate unionism, to win partisan advantage in the coming elections, and to strike a terrific blow at our war effort. Our nation as a whole suffered grievously.

The technique used in Philadelphia can be repeated almost at will in our great metropolitan centers. Indeed, unless we uproot this explosive anti-Negroism from our land, and soon, it could serve exceedingly well the aims

Fate of Postwar Negro Is The Stake for All America

of an emergent American fascism.

FROM this point of view, too, the congressional fight on reconversion takes on added significance. One of the main reasons the polltaxers teamed up with the Republicans to defeat the Kilgore-Murray-Truman bill is to avoid the necessity of paying liberal unemployment benefits to unemployed southern Negroes, thereby creating a situation wherein their labor can be commanded for little or nothing.

As in this and many other instances in the past, the issue of Negro rights will rise up repeatedly to bedevil a nation eager and determined to fashion a decent society upon the ruins of this war. Unless it is resolved fundamentally, once and for all, trade unions may find their ranks split wide open and their bargaining efforts defeated time and again; reaction may be elected to the White House and to Congress in the fall; complete victory in war may be prevented; and, indeed, the whole new world which is being born out of this people's war may be doomed to a premature death.

It is important for Negroes to realize that their continued march toward freedom depends upon firm alliance with labor and other progressive forces which are struggling for a new day for the common man. It is no less important for white trade unionists and other progressives to learn quickly, as many have not, that the achievement of the main goals for which they strive is now possible only through the destruction of the anti-Negro discriminations which hamper the progress of all men.