

Three Centuries of Struggle for Negro Democratic Rights

By Doxey Wilkerson

(Continued from yesterday)

The progressive policies of the Roosevelt Administration during the period of the "New Deal" began to lay the basis for a new perspective for the Negro people. The focusing of attention upon the South as the "Number One Problem of the Nation," the equitable practices which the WPA sought to establish in the southern states, the growth of Negro-white tenant farmers' unions, the Negro-white unemployment movement, and especially the advent of the CIO in the South, with accompanying trends toward the unification of the white and Negro proletariat—these also contributed significantly to this end. These beginnings have been enormously accentuated by this people's war of national liberation

and survival. Threatened with its own destruction, our country has been forced progressively to take steps toward welding our entire people into an unbreakable national front for victory, and toward mobilizing our total manpower resources for the crucial battles on the production and the military fronts. These developments have brought about a profound and fundamental change in the relations of the Negro people to America.

On the one hand, the Negro people as a whole, in common with the rest of the country, have come to see that their only hope for freedom lies in the triumph of United Nations arms and the destruction of fascism. They have come to recognize this as their war, a war for their own survival as well as for the survival of the nation.

On the other hand, the win-the-war forces of our nation have come increasingly to recognize that the question of Negro freedom is integrally bound up with the nation's struggle for survival, that the extension of democracy for the Negro people, once viewed in terms of social ethics, must now be approached as an urgent war necessity. They have brought new allies to the Negro people in their struggle for freedom.

The objective results of this new relationship are to be seen in every area of our national life. A special agency of government, FEPC, moves to eliminate racial discrimination in employment. The War Labor Board has decreed that the wages of white and Negro workers must be equal. Despite still existing discrimination, Negroes now fight for their country in all branches of the armed forces. Liberty ships bearing the names of famous Negroes are sailed by mixed white and Negro crews under the command of Negro captains. Traditional Jim Crow lines in public places are tending to break down, even in the South. Steps are taken toward the entrance of Negro players into organized baseball. The movement to abolish the poll tax grows apace. Twenty national Negro organizations unite in a manifesto declaring their support of the war and their independence as a political group. A Negro Communist is elected to the City Council of New York. Hundreds of thousands of Negro workers recently admitted into war industries are forging new bonds of unity with their white associates, especially in the great and democratic industrial unions of the CIO. As Frederick Douglass said of a similar development in an earlier period of our history, "The revolution is tremendous."

This changing relationship of the Negro people to America is fundamental. It reflects the historic fact that the freedom goals of the Negro have become inseparably merged with the survival goals of the nation. Both must now move forward together. The short-time prospect for the achievement of full democratic and social rights for the Negro people has again become very real.

The Perspective of Tehran

The historic conferences of Moscow and Tehran have tremendously advanced the perspective for the complete liberation of the Negro people, for extension and strengthening of the trend toward full democratic and social rights—not only during the war, but on into the peace which will follow. This perspective, likewise, arises out of historic necessity.

The crucial problem facing the nation today is the welding of national unity for victory in war and peace, to implement the agreements of Tehran. This goal can be attained only through the effective coalition of the democratic sectors of capital, organized labor, the Negro people, and all other win-the-war groups—in support of the Roosevelt Administration, against the defeatists and pro-fascists, for a people's victory and a people's peace. Such a coalition can be achieved and maintained only on

NEW FILMS

PASSAGE TO MARSEILLE, produced by Warner Bros. by Cary Bateson and Jack Moffitt. Photography by Bogart, Michele Morgan, Claude Rains, Philip Dorn, George Tobias, Vladimir Schloff, Edward G. Ross.

By David P.

The betrayal of France by D. and the rise of the Free French movement, "Passage to Marseille," the latest guns in Warner Brothers extensive

Like "Cross of Lorraine," the anti-fascist politics with thrilling drama. Brilliantly acted by a dream cast which includes almost every outstanding actor at Warners, "Passage to Marseille" contains among other things a devastating indictment of the Munich sell-out. It also shows how the Nazis fight and how to fight Nazis. In one of the strongest scenes in the picture, Humphrey Bogart is shown blasting away at the survivors of a Nazi bombing plane that had just completed a merciless job of bombing and strafing a Free French ship. The commander of the ship implores Bogart to stop "assassinating helpless men."

Points to Real Assassins

Without a moment's hesitation Bogart tells the commander to look around and see who the real assassins are. The commander sees the dead and wounded on the deck and is silent. Bogart continues firing his machine gun until all the Nazis are wiped out. This scene was vigorously applauded by the audience. It deserves to be.

The betrayal of France is seen through the eyes of Humphrey Bogart, a fighting anti-fascist newspaper editor who is sentenced to fifteen years on Devil's Island, in French Guiana for publicly exhorting Daladier on his return from Munich. The film shows a fascist mob wrecking this young Zola's print-shop. The police stand idly by. "Those fascist flunkies," comments Bogart bitterly, "just stood there to make sure the job was done."

"Passage to Marseille" tells its grim story in flashback form. The horror of life on Devil's Island is

the basis of the progressive extension of democracy. With special reference to the Negro people's relations to the coalition, this means still more rapid progress toward the establishment of their full democratic and social rights.

This question is fundamental to the implementation of Tehran. Unless the Negro people are brought quickly and full into the democratic national front, the victory of pro-fascist reaction in the 1944 elections looms as a very real threat, indeed, imperiling the whole new perspective now before the world. Moreover, this question is integrally bound up with the problem of mobilizing our Latin American and colonial allies for effective prosecution of the war. Thus, the issue of full democratic and social rights for the Negro people is, irrevocably, again on the agenda of history.

In the nation's struggle to achieve the democratic perspectives of Tehran, the Negro people will rise to their full stature and dignity as free men. The Negro's own struggles for specific objectives—especially for equal job opportunities and civil rights—will achieve increasing success. Moreover, in the course of these struggles, new and powerful allies will come forward to champion the cause of Negro freedom.

These things will happen, not merely because they ought, but primarily because they must. In this unprecedented period of history, much as was true during the 1890's, the progressive extension of democracy to the Negro people has become an imperative requirement for the maintenance of democracy in the nation as a whole.

Thus, it is that Negro History Week—1944 finds the Negro people farther along the road to full democratic rights than ever before—with a very substantial basis for confidence in early victory. In the words of Earl Browder: "All the forces of history are now working for Negro equality." True American patriots of all races and creeds will collaborate with these forces of history—of which they are an integral part.

THE STAGE

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ton Favored NYAC Meet

again in the Buermeyer 500 against four cup debutants—Cadet George Berger of Army; Lieut. Frank Cotter, of the Marines; Herb McKenley, of Boston College, and Jeffery Kirk, Penn star last year. This is the most wide-open race on the card. Herbert is the favorite only if he can snatch the lead at the start or soon after.

Ensign Oliver Hunter, of Columbia Midshipmen, appears to be an easy winner of the Toussaint 2-mile in which he ran second to Greg Rice last year. Lieut. Joe McCluskey and Clayton Farrar of the Coast Guard, will try to extend the former Notre Dame ace.

Other favorites are Eddie Conwell, of NYU, who won at Boston last week, and Herb Thompson, national champion, in the 60-yard sprint; Tom Todd, of Siena College, 104A champion, Lon Kinzie, of Lexington, Va., and Ray Ramsey, of Columbia, Midshipmen, Boston winner, in the 80-yard high hurdles; Bill Vessie, Dartmouth Marine, in the high jump, where he will meet formidable opposition from Sergeant Joshua Williamson and Corp. Estell Harper, a 6:7 leaper. Vessie hopes to shatter the world record of 6 ft. 9 3/4 inches before he moves on for advanced Marine training.

Top relays will be Army's race against Princeton, Penn and Cornell, Rochester's race against Holy Cross, B. C. and Villanova, and NYU's race against Columbia, CCNY and Columbia Midshipmen for the Met. college titles in both the mile and 2-mile races.

Army, participating in the NYAC games for the first time, is sending down 17 men as a tuneup for the 104A championships. Major General F. B. Wilby, West Point commandant, and his staff will be on hand to see the cadets perform in seven events.

Backboards

NYU Face Tough Game

at Buffalo

Monday night program, while the tall Titans of Westminster have drawn the Brooklyn College Kingsmen.

The Presidents, winners of nine out of thirteen thus far, will be in tuneup action in Philadelphia tonight, against Temple in one half of