

4 Major Strides Forward

By Doxey Wilkerson

The goal of full democracy for the Negro people was pushed forward last week on four major fronts—in the railroad industry, in organized baseball, in the field of united political action, and at the Cairo-Tehran conferences of heads of Allied states. Of them all, the one where Negro Americans probably received no mention will prove to be the most fundamental and decisive in the ultimate achievement of Negro freedom.



1. In ordering 22 railroads and seven Brotherhood and AFL unions to stop discriminating against Negro workers within 30 days, the Committee on Fair Employment Practice attacked the chief remaining bastion of jim crow employment policy.

Ten years ago, only William Z. Foster and his fellow-Communists were actively campaigning against anti-Negro bars in the railroad industry. It is a measure of the Negro's great progress toward freedom that now, under the aegis of the friendly Roosevelt Administration, an agency of the U. S. Government sets out to destroy these traditional employment discrimination.

2. When Judge K. M. Landis, high commissioner of baseball set the stage for the immediate entrance of Negro players into the major and minor leagues, he advanced the cause of full democracy

for the Negro people in areas far broader than the sport over which he rules.

FAIR PLAY

Baseball, perhaps more than any popular institution, symbolizes the genius of American democracy—equality of opportunity, fair play, group cooperation for common goals. Now to perfect this symbol, through the employment of Negro players. Is to strike a major blow at the whole system of jim crow which undermines our democracy itself.

3. The joint political manifesto by 20 national Negro organizations, representing approximately 6,000,000 members, is far more than "notice that the Negro has come of age politically." It is an expression of the developing unity of the Negro people, themselves, and of their growing alignment with the progressive win-the-war forces of our country.

The truly outstanding group of national Negro leaders who issued this statement correctly raise the demand for "full citizenship status" within the framework of the nation's struggle against fascism. They call for "vigorous prosecution of the war," and oppose "any negotiated peace as advocated by Hitler-like forces within our country." They declare that the Negro's political balance of power in 17 states will be thrown to the support of candidates who work to extend full citizenship to the Negro people, "to better the lot of all disadvantaged people in this country," and to "end imperialism and colonial exploitation." In the struggle for these common goals, they invite the cooperation of "enlightened labor, church, farm and other groups."

In thus mobilizing their strength for united political action in cooperation with other progressive forces of the country, against the Axis abroad and its helpers here at home, these 20 national Negro organizations are following the one sure road to full democracy for the Negro people and the nation as a whole.

4. When leaders of the four major Allied powers met in Cairo and in Tehran, they issued no proclamation on Negro freedom—but they did something far more fundamental. They agreed quickly and utterly to destroy fascism in Europe and the Orient, and to organize a just and durable peace.

PEOPLE'S POWER

This mighty blow at the forces of reaction in our own country and throughout the world cemented the progressive coalition of states which alone can guarantee the ultimate liberation of the Negro and all other oppressed peoples. In the wake of their military triumphs, which are sure to continue, we may confidently expect an on-rush of democratic people's power which will engulf the world forces of reaction and assure a truly progressive peace.

Fair employment practices in the railroad industry, Negro players in organized baseball, united progressive political action by the Negro people, destruction of the Axis and organization of a people's peace—none of these goals is yet achieved. But the events of last week place them all definitely on the order of the day. Now let labor, the Negro people, and all other progressive forces of America work more vigorously than ever for their quick final attainment.