

Toward Freedom

The Negro people have lost their greatest friend, but the strong progressive movement which he set into motion will continue to grow in power until the last vestige of Jim-crowism has been wiped off the face of America.

It is fitting that we should mourn the death of President Roosevelt. Our grief, like that of freedom-loving peoples the world over, is overwhelming.

It is fitting that we take stock of the profound qualitative changes which Roosevelt's leadership has made in the status of the Negro people, that we see clearly the crucial moment of history in which we find ourselves, and that we gather courage from momentous events of the past and present, girding ourselves for the continuing struggles that will surely win those democratic goals which lie just ahead.

THE PAST: Primarily as a result of over twelve years of Roosevelt's democratic leadership of our nation, the reactionary trend by which the Negro masses have been oppressed ever since the defeat of Reconstruction has been sharply reversed.

Unprecedented economic opportunities have been opened up to the Negro people. Negro



by **Doxey A. Wilkerson**

voters in the North have become a mature and powerful political force for freedom throughout America. The southern "white primary" is already on the way out, and the polltax is tottering. Lynching has practically disappeared. Jimcrow barriers in social life are in process of disintegration. Many color-bars in the military forces have been destroyed, and even the basic structural segregation of the Army has been cracked. And "no discrimination because of race" has been firmly established as the active policy of our federal government.

The triumph of Roosevelt's policies has transformed the Negro's once hopeless oppression into rapidly growing freedom, his former despair into confident struggle for democratic goals which are now close at hand.

THE PRESENT: The Negro people, our country and the entire world are now in the midst of momentous events which promise to catapult history forward in a tremendous leap more beneficial to the common man than any which have occurred in history.

Almost hourly we await news of victory over the fascist hordes of Europe which, just yesterday threatened all mankind with slavery. And the doom of their vicious allies in

Roosevelt Made It Possible for Us to Win

the Far East—and those right here in America—is sealed.

Already the representatives of the freedom-loving peoples of the world, including our own, are moving toward San Francisco where the structure of enduring peace will be built, and from which will flow rising living standards and increasing freedom for all men.

The foundations of Roosevelt's program for a freer and more secure world have already been laid. We now proceed to erect the structure which he envisioned. And at the head of our nation stands a leader whom we have every reason to expect will drive straight ahead along the course charted by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin at Teheran and Yalta.

THE FUTURE: The once isolated Negro masses approach the future in ever-growing unity with new and powerful allies—organized labor, great industrialists and financiers who have learned the crucial lessons of the period, and masses of white Americans who never before realized that the "Negro problem" was their very own. Moreover, this unity born of war will be strengthened and consolidated in the struggles to win the peace.

The tasks ahead are clear. We have the means by which to achieve them. We will have to fight hard—and in firm unity. But we will surely win.