

Trend of the Times

By Doxey Wilkerson

THE U. S. Supreme Court's 8-10-1 decision outlawing the Texas "white primary" and its subsequent 7-10-2 ban on Florida's "labor fraud" slave code, highlight a trend which is in process of becoming dominant in our society. It suggests the key to effective wartime struggles for Negro democratic rights.

Look at the Negro's rapid strides toward freedom during the less than three years of this people's war.



Hundreds of thousands of Negro men and women are perfecting skills and earning good wages in industrial and civil service jobs where none but a white

face was seen before. They are also entering into the ranks of organized labor in ever increasing numbers, especially in the great democratic unions of the CIO. New bonds of comradeship are being forged between Negro workers and white.

For the first time in history a special agency of the federal government—FEPC—is created to blast racial bars to full employment. Another agency of government—WLB—issues the unprecedented decision that the wages of white and Negro workers must be equal.

In the armed forces, the Negro people are fighting for their own and their country's liberty in every branch of the service. A Negro holds the post of Brigadier General. Negro and white officer candidates pursue their training together on a basis of complete equality, even in the Deep South. The Army's Judge Advocate has had to let down the bars against Negro lawyers. Ne-

groes drive tanks in Italy and the South Pacific. Negro pursuit flyers are covering themselves with glory in the air, and other Negro flyers are being trained as bombardiers.

MIXED white and Negro crews sail Liberty Ships named after famous Negroes and commanded by Negro captains. The Navy is forced, even though reluctantly, to admit Negroes into the ranks of fighting seamen and to train them as officers.

More than this, the Negro people are finding new friends and allies in their wartime struggles for greater freedom. A Henry Wallace, an Eleanor Roosevelt, a Pearl Buck, a Wendell Willkie and many others move forward to champion the extension of Negro democratic rights. The editor of an influential Virginia newspaper calls for the abolition of Jim crow on buses and street cars—and gets an overwhelmingly favorable response from the public. The power of organized labor is being thrown ever more frequently and effectively into the struggle for Negro freedom.

It is in the light of this trend that we must interpret the recent liberating decisions of the Supreme Court. It is in the light of what produced this trend that we must determine strategy and tactics for guaranteeing its extension throughout the war and on into the post-war world.

First, the Negro's wartime march toward freedom is made possible by the inherently liberating tendencies of this progressive war, in the course of which the further extension of democracy for the Negro people has become an imperative necessity for national survival. This is why once-impregnable barriers now crash before the growing dem-

ocratic forces which this people's war has set into motion and continues to strengthen. This is why the win-the-war forces of our country come forward as new and powerful allies of the Negro people.

Second, the Negro's wartime march toward freedom is a product of vigorous struggle. The progressive nature of the war does not solve problems automatically; it merely creates the most favorable conditions for winning progressive solutions. They must actually be won—as in the case of NAACP's fight against the "white primary"—through incessant and vigorous struggle.

The effective combination of these two factors points the way to further acceleration and extension of the trend toward Negro freedom.

Let the Negro people now exert their maximum strength toward winning the war in the quickest possible time. Let them push forward their struggles for increased democratic rights as a necessary means toward victory and a just peace. Let them establish the firmest possible unity with the developing coalition of all other progressive win-the-war forces of our nation—fighting for the triumph of the Roosevelt Administration in the 1944 elections, for that speedy victory and that just and enduring peace which are the promise of Teheran.

Let the Negro people do these things now. This is their best possible guarantee for continued progress toward freedom in the course of the nation's struggles for victory. This is also their best possible guarantee for the ultimate attainment of complete economic, political and social equality in the new world to be built once the victory has been won.