

Toward Freedom

LAST month's World Trade Union Conference in London tremendously advanced the freedom perspective of Negro and other minority peoples. This is true not only because of the speeches and decisions made at the conference, but even more because of the new and progressive unity of the democratic workingmen of the world to which the conference gave organizational expression.

Here were the elected representatives of 60,000,000 organized workers meeting to exchange ideas and take action on the most crucial questions confronting the common people of the world—victory in war, the destruction of fascism and the building of a just and enduring peace. Included among them were not only the labor leaders of great nations, but of small nations as well and of colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Meeting at the same time in Soviet Crimea were the leaders of the three most powerful and democratic nations in the world—Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union—and their concern was exactly the same as that of the London conference—victory, the "extirpation" of fascism and the building of enduring peace and security. There were no colonial representatives at



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Yalta, but the question of the colonies must have loomed large in the discussions there, for to raise their living standards and advance their freedom is now the necessary key to the vastly expanded markets which the great powers have got to find to assure enduring peace and security after this war.

It is not strange that both conferences agreed upon identical programs—world political and economic organization as proposed at Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods. Those agreements set forth the only practical foundations for the kind of postwar world in which Negro, colonial and other disadvantaged peoples can hope to emerge toward freedom and security.

FOR reasons of diplomacy which we can well understand, the statesmen at Yalta did not spell out, in so many words, the full implications of the agreements they reached, especially on the delicate questions of colonial policy and the treatment of minority racial and religious groups within the countries involved. But the world labor leaders at London were not the least bit reticent. They declared:

"A leading position among the postwar demands of organized labor must be positive solutions for the serious problems of discrimination and exploitation throughout the

What the London Parley Means to the Negroes

world" (Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union).

"If this conference is to achieve anything, it must be prepared to fight against British and other colonial imperialism which, to us in the colonies, is even worse than fascism" (I. T. A. Wallace Johnson, labor delegate from Sierra Leone, West Africa).

And the conference as a whole concurred.

Their manifesto declares: "The World Labor Conference . . . considers it necessary to bring to an end the system of colonies, dependencies and subject countries as spheres of economic exploitation, and to facilitate immediately the developments of free trade unions in those countries."

THEIR final session voted to set up a new international trade union federation "uniting the trade union bodies of freedom-loving nations, irrespective of race, creed, or color, or of political, religious or philosophical distinction."

Thus, the organized workers of the world are creating a powerful federation pledged to wipe Jimcrowsism in all its forms off the face of the earth and their program is completely in accord with that put forward by the most powerful nations of the world at Yalta. Nothing has ever happened in all history that does so much to make actually attainable the goals of freedom for which the Negro and other oppressed people now struggle.