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LONDON

TROUBLE FOR DREAM HOUSE

Cleveland, Ohio—When the FDR house co-ops finally raised the \$4,000 to finance the purchase of their "dream house," their troubles just began.

No sooner did neighbours see several Negroes among the residents than rumors started circulating through the community that the FDR House members were "exponents of interracial marriage." For the first few weeks there was open resentment. Clothes, hung on the lines in the backyards to dry, were slashed with razors. Couples walking along the street were booed.

Instead of becoming discouraged, FDR House accepted the situation as a challenge and strove to prove that democracy could be more than a word. Members started a house-to-house canvass among neighbors in a two-block area to find out what their objections to the co-op were. Questions posed to the co-ops almost in all cases concerned mixed marriage.

Simeon Booker, one of the two Negro members, recalls: "In all our canvassing, there was only one case of extreme negative reaction. However, we did have to correct the impression that we were trying to foster interracial marriage."

To offset the wave of resentment, FDR House sponsored an open house for neighbors. They were shown through the house and the co-operative plan explained to them. "The open house was a miracle worker," says Booker. "Neighbors entered with stiff, drawn faces, left with smiles."

Now that they have become better acquainted with the co-ops they are among the best supporters of the co-op.

BREAD AND BUTTER

But the lessons haven't all been one-sided. Negro America, from its professionals and businessmen in the top-most brackets down to the lowly domestic, has discovered in dramatic terms on which side its bread is buttered. ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

With more than 95 percent of the Negro population working with its hands for a living, its destiny and self-interest lies with white men who labor. The Negro has found a new dignity in being a "worker". Author Fannie Cook expresses it vividly in her new book Mrs. Palmer's Honey, the story of a Negro maid who got a war job. Speaking to a CIO meeting, Honey says:

"The CIO come along and said to me, 'Honey, you're a worker.' At first I drew back.

"I said, 'I'm just Honey, a brown-skinned girl.'

"CIO answered, 'You got a job in a factory. That counts more than the color of your skin.' First time in my whole life anything about me counted more than the color of my skin."

Today Negroes doing important, skilled work in the nation have gained respect and pride. They are no longer on the outside looking in, no longer sweeping floors and dusting shelves, no longer the stepchildren of American industry. They have taken their rightful place in the ranks of the greatest production team in the world. They are part and parcel of the world community.

With their new stature, they are finding that ability and honesty and sincerity can count more than color in the labor movement. They are taking their place in the ranks of local unions not as Negroes, patronized and pampered to win their favor, but as full, erect men recognized for their wisdom, not their color. They have been elected by white and Negro union membership to high office without regard for race. In more than half a dozen international CIO unions they hold important posts.



Easter Greetings

our Lord, Jesus Christ. May His blessing and guidance be bestowed upon you.

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