

# EDITORIAL

## Ghettoes, American Style

Fair minded Americans who have been protesting Hitler's despicable plan to herd German Jews into ghettoes will be surprised to learn that while they were venting their anger on th dictator their own government has been busy planning ghettoes for American Negroes through the Federal Housing Authority.

The American plan lacks the forthright and brutal frankness of Hitler's plan but in the long run it is calculated to be as effective.

FHA, as everybody knows, was formed to aid middle class folk build homes; it does so through guaranteeing mortgage loans. Theoretically, at least, the government is anxious to see all of its citizens become home owners and in seeing that the homes they build are erected in desirable neighborhoods.

But FHA has a secret rule whereby it refuses to guarantee a loan for a Negro in a so-called "white neighborhood." A white neighborhood may be defined as one where white people don't want Negro neighbors.

In effect the rule means that Negroes must be confined to their "own neighborhoods."

And when racial groups are confined to "their own neighborhoods" ghettoes are established.

Worse than that: banks and mortgage companies think that loans in so-called "Negro neighborhoods" are poor risks. The financial institutions have that rule because they know that too often Negro neighborhoods have no protection from city planners against the onward march of industrialization. Too often, too, those neighborhoods lack adequate police and health protection.

The upshot of the whole matter is that FHA loans, if made at all for Negro neighborhoods, are low. Consequently Negroes who want to own homes, who want to become property owners and get a stake in the city in which they live are denied that opportunity. Prey to rent sharks and bad housing, they can't save enough to educate their children adequately and provide good home life.

Lack of decent housing and good environment means more juvenile delinquency, more crime, more bad health and in the long run more taxes for everybody.

Here is an issue that ought to call forth a vehement protest from every person who has condemned Hitler. But will it?

Will the movie actors issue another Declaration of Independence condemning FHA? Will the Hearst papers print two-column editorials thundering against FHA planned ghettoes?

Will American cities resound to the oratory from a thousand and one pulpits and public meetings.

We don't know. But we doubt it. Americans have been practicing repression against the Negro people so long that they take it for granted. They can see the beam in Hitler's eye but they show little desire to withdraw a similar beam from their own.