

Toward Freedom

LAST week's Democratic National Convention struck a series of telling blows at the noisy anti-Negro, anti-Roosevelt polltaxers who found their reactionary purposes blocked at every turn. Despite its limitations, this Chicago convention provided the leadership and adopted the program which are basic for continued progress toward full Negro democratic rights.

First, and of transcendent importance, the Negro's greatest friend in the White House was nominated for a fourth term. Not only were the southerners slapped down in their attempt to restore the two-thirds rule which would give them veto power over presidential and vice-presidential nominations, but their much advertised "revolt" against a fourth term was a complete flop. They couldn't even muster 100 anti-Roosevelt votes out of a total of nearly 1,200.

The polltax Democrats were forced to accept "That Man" whose anti-discrimination policies make them hate him more than any Republican in the country.

Second, the southerners were defeated in their effort to select a polltax candidate for Vice-President. They wanted Byrnes of South Carolina or Bankhead of Alabama. The President himself pulled Byrnes out of the race, and the progressive majority in the convention turned thumbs down on Bank-



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head. Thus, the southerners' only choice was between two known progressives, neither of whom is in any way "their man."

IT IS a bit amusing to read with what haste the southern delegations, frightened out of their wits by the Wallace strength on the first ballot, "bolted" to a candidate whom they hoped would prove to be the lesser evil. They were quite ready to overlook the successive Truman Committee blasts at anti-Negro discrimination in war industries.

Third, the "white supremacy," "states' rights" plank which the southerners tried to incorporate into the platform was rejected overwhelmingly by the convention.

This is what they fought for: "Exercise by the states of their reserved powers to determine the qualifications of their voters and to regulate their public schools and attendance thereon is not subject to control by either the legislative or executive branches of the federal government in the absence of a constitutional amendment ceding such powers."

This is what they got: "We believe that the country which has the greatest measure of social justice is capable of the greatest achievements. We believe that racial and religious minorities have the right to live, develop and vote equally with all citizens and share the rights that are guaranteed by our Constitution. Congress should exert its full constitu-

Democratic Platform Basic For Progress of Negro People

tional powers to protect those rights."

WE CAN well understand why the disgruntled anti-Roosevelt Texas delegation issued a statement complaining bitterly that the convention adopted "a platform designed to secure the support of Negroes, the CIO, the Communists and other radical minority groups."

Although that unprecedented brevity of the Democratic platform as a whole in itself precluded a much more detailed anti-discrimination plank, still the absence of more pro-Negro "words" in the platform undoubtedly represents a concession to the poll tax minority in the Democratic Party. But this is a concession that can give them little comfort. It is now clear that the strong coalition of labor, Negro and other progressive forces which made Roosevelt's candidacy unassailable also has the power to complete the rout of the southerners who are trying vainly to win a commanding position in Democratic Party councils.

Finally, the more general war and peace policies adopted by the Democratic Convention constitute a basic endorsement and extension of those progressive Roosevelt policies which chafe the only path to speedy victory, enduring peace, and economic security for the masses of men. Only in terms of precisely this perspective for our nation and the world can there be any hope whatever for the continued progress of the Negro people toward freedom.