

Toward Freedom

THE COMING Illinois-Midwestern Negro People's Assembly for a Fourth Term for Roosevelt (Chicago, June 24-25) recalls the honorable tradition of Negro people's assemblies in an earlier period of national crisis. It is a tradition which warrants far more general revival in this most crucial moment in the history of the Negro people and the nation.

Immediately after the Civil War, when our country hesitated to follow the progressive course of reconstruction which alone could consolidate the democratic gains of victory, there sprang up all over the South a series of now historic Negro people's conventions. Black men, fresh from the shackles of slavery, came together to discuss the urgent problems of the Negro people of the South. They did much to hasten the progressive period of Reconstruction when history took a big leap forward for the South and the nation as a whole.

Today, the Allied armies of liberation move forward to the final conquest of Nazi Fortress Europe. In league with the powerful Red Army on the East, they will utterly destroy the fascist forces of enslavement.

This is the happy moment for which progressive men have been struggling since



By Doxey Wilkerson

the rise of fascism a decade ago. History is again on the verge of a mighty leap forward. To hasten the triumph of the now united Anglo-Soviet-American arms, to assure the building of a Teheran peace—these are the supreme and imperative requirements to open up a new era of freedom and security for all the peoples of the world. They are also the only fundamental guarantees of the continued extension of freedom for the Negro people.

IN THIS HOUR of crisis and prospect, the Negro people are again moving forward to help our country steer true to the course of progress. Now politically more mature, far better organized, and in closer collaboration with powerful allies, they are in position decisively to influence their own future and that of the nation and the world. And they are measuring up to the responsibility which their growing strength and influence entail.

The current of progressive political action which now runs deep among the Negro people is a vital and worthy extension of the tradition begun by the Negro freedmen of the South some eighty years ago. It is this trend which is so strikingly symbolized by the coming Illinois-Midwest People's Assembly for a Fourth Term for Roosevelt.

Note these statesman-like words in the "Call" to the June 24-25 Assembly, issued by

Coming Negro People's Assembly Revives An Honorable Tradition

more than 100 Negro leaders in all walks of life:

"President Roosevelt must be drafted for a fourth term. The basic interests of the Negro people and the nation require it.

"The 1944 Presidential elections is the most crucial since Abraham Lincoln's death. The Negro vote may not only decide who will be the next President, but also the fate of the nation and the world for generations to come.

THE CAIRO and Moscow Conferences, culminating in the historic Teheran agreement between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, have produced a workable blueprint for not only winning the war against fascism, but also for securing a just peace to follow.

"Reelection of Roosevelt is demanded if our nation is to fulfill its part of the Teheran obligations. . . ."

Here is the correct and basic approach to the problems of the Negro people in this critical moment of history— independent political action to guarantee a public policy at home that will back up our fighting men abroad who now advance to corner and destroy the fascist threat to the freedom of all mankind.

The utmost success to the coming Chicago meeting! May it be the forerunner for many more such Negro People's Assemblies throughout the nation.