

Toward Freedom

THE defeat of Vice-President Wallace and adoption of a weak anti-discrimination plank at the Democratic national convention brought bitter denunciation from most of the Negro press. Such reactions are fully understandable and warranted. But it would be disastrous, indeed, if the Negro people were to allow the emotional and blindly partisan rantings of much of the Negro press to divide them from the coalition of progressive forces centered around President Roosevelt, which alone can be expected to provide the political setting in which the Negro's wartime march toward freedom can proceed.

It is unfortunate but nevertheless true that our "two-party system" does not afford voters a clear choice between one party that is progressive and another party that is reactionary.

THE nonpartisan approach is completely ignored in many Negro press reactions to the Democratic convention. With reference to the vice-presidential nomination, for example, the N. Y. Amsterdam News concludes: "Hence, the present Vice-President was thrown overboard—not by the South alone, but by the entire Democratic Party."

In similar vein, with reference to the Democratic anti-discrimination plank, the Afro-American editorializes: "Certain it is



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that the great Democratic Party which bid openly for the colored vote in 1940 has withdrawn the glad hand in just four years."

Both of these papers had clearly gone over to the Republicans, lock, stock and barrel, even long before the GOP convention.

BUT nonpartisanship is carried to extreme by the more genuinely independent Chicago Defender. In a warm plague-on-both-your-houses editorial, this paper declares: "As of now, there is little to choose between Democrats and Republicans. Negroes . . . must take a 'wait and see' attitude of complete independence."

Such a position not only leaves the Negro all dressed up with no place to go, but it also ignores the real difference between the relative strength of the progressive forces within the two parties.

FAR more sane and realistic are the reactions of several other Negro papers which, unhappily, have far less circulation than the three mentioned above.

Commenting upon the defeat of Vice-President Wallace, the Michigan Chronicle warns that Negroes must not be regarded as "political expendables." "We issue this warning because we have championed the liberal program of the Democratic Party and have fought the rise of reactionary Republicans. We believe also that no living American can better shape the course of the future than

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President Roosevelt. Nevertheless, he must speak out now against the rising tide of reaction which will destroy the fruits of victory and render world peace in the long run impossible."

The Norfolk Journal and Guide declares: "While we do not necessarily endorse the stratagems of the Democratic convention, we do see its rationalization—that to go too far ahead of the near-bolters of the South would endanger the continuation of the Democratic administration, and all its present and planned programs for spreading equitably the benefits of American citizenship. It is not to be forgotten that a defeat for the administration would, in that sense, be a very real setback to the cause of all minorities in the country."

The (N. Y.) People's Voice states: "We preferred the renomination of Vice-President Wallace. But our disappointment on this score does not blind us to the extremely important fact that a true progressive holds second place on the Democratic ticket."

Also: "The fact that the Democratic platform does not spell out in detail all the anti-discrimination measures which Negroes desire cannot obscure the transcendent fact that the progressive leadership and program which emerged from the Democratic national convention are backed by a long record of 'deeds' which give assurance of continued progress toward full democracy and economic security for Negro and all other Americans.

The last three papers set forth a truly balanced and realistic guide to Negro voters.