

Toward Freedom

THE people of New York have an opportunity tomorrow to strike a powerful blow at the whole rotten system of race hate—by voting overwhelmingly for the reelection of Benjamin Davis to the City Council.

It is not strange that Ben's candidacy has aroused nationwide interest and activity — both among Negroes and among their reactionary enemies; for here symbolized is precisely that democratic freedom which the Negro people everywhere are struggling to achieve, and which the Bilbos and Rankins and their powerful financial backers are trying to block.



No wonder the Republican New York Age calls for "No. 1" votes for Ben Davis; that other Negro papers in Los Angeles, Chicago, Oklahoma City and elsewhere urge the reelection of Councilman Davis; that the progressive trade union movement of New York is solidly behind Davis, and that rank and file Negro workers throughout the nation are watching how we vote tomorrow and hoping that Davis goes back to the City Council. Ben's election represents the democracy they are fighting for.

No wonder the Hearst, McCormick and Scripps-Howard press all over the nation—along with so-called more "respectable" reactionary daily papers in New York City and

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elsewhere—threw their whole power into the fight last June to get the Democratic Party to void its nomination of Ben Davis, and have continued to snipe at him ever since; that Mississippi's John Rankin used his Dies Committee in an effort to smear Ben, prevent his reelection, and thereby keep any Negro from serving on the Council of America's greatest city. Ben's defeat would strengthen their whole anti-Negro, anti-labor program of reaction for our nation.

No wonder the Pittsburgh Courier's Negro "Pegler," George Schuyler, A. Philip Randolph and his social democratic friends, and the Trotskyites have all joined hands in a disgraceful campaign of lies, slanders and distortions in an effort to defeat Ben Davis. This is consistent with their usual role as so-called "leftists" servants of reaction.

THERE was a time, about 80 years ago, when the Negro people were moving rapidly towards the achievement of their full democratic rights. This was during the period of Reconstruction, an outstanding feature of which was the political democracy which brought Negro citizens into the leadership of state and national government.

But this whole progressive trend was defeated in the late 1870s and the decades which followed; and the Negro people were

Ben Davis Symbolizes Negro Freedom Struggle

pushed back into a status closely akin to slavery, the southern white masses deprived of their economic and political freedom, and our nation as a whole plagued again by the powerful coalition of reaction from the semi-feudal South and the corporation-controlled North.

IN THE course of the people's war we have just won, the Negro, in close alliance with the progressive labor movement, began again to move rapidly toward freedom. The election of Ben Davis to the City Council in 1943—with more than six times as many first-choice votes as Sen. Bilbo received in Mississippi—was symptomatic of this strong progressive wartime trend.

The reactionary coalition of polltax southerners and northern big business is again trying to put the Negro people and organized labor "back in their place." That is one reason they so furiously assail the candidacy of Ben Davis. That is also why it is tremendously important for every genuine democrat to cast his vote for Ben Davis "No. 1" tomorrow, and to guarantee that dozens of his friends and associates do the same thing.

There is no more effective way by which the citizens of Manhattan can repudiate the anti-Negro, anti-labor forces of our country as a whole than by voting overwhelmingly for the reelection of Councilman Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.