

Toward Freedom

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has knocked down one more anti-Negro barrier in the armed forces—this time in the WAVES and SPARS. Both the Navy and the Coast Guard will now accept Negro women, as the Army has been doing for some time.

This is no isolated act, but is the last in a long series of steps taken by President Roosevelt to break down racial discrimination in the armed forces.

Republican propagandists are trying hard to turn Negro voters against the President by playing upon their justified anger over still existing military discriminations. But they are on extremely shaky ground.

President Roosevelt did not create military discriminations. They were there long before 1933, and were especially flagrant during World War I. Thanks to the democratic and courageous policies of the President, they are rapidly being eliminated, one by one.

JUST look at the record of the past few years:

1. Negroes admitted into the Navy, Coast



By Doxey Wilkerson

Guard and Marines as fighting seamen and as commissioned officers;

2. Negroes trained as pilots and bombardiers in the Air Corps;

3. Negroes in every other branch of the armed forces—on a scale unheard of in World War I;

4. More than 5,000 Negro officers in the Army (as compared with fewer than 1,000 in the last war);

5. Negro and white soldiers eating, sleeping and studying together in officer candidates schools (even in the South!);

6. Negro women in the WACS;

7. Negro women admitted into the Army Nurse Corps without restrictions;

8. Anti-Negro discrimination banned in Army post-exchanges, buses and theatres—also in the South (by an order which still has the southern poll-taxers fighting mad);

9. Army plans for jimcrow centers for returning Negro veterans scrapped, and mixed Negro-white furlough centers substituted in their place; and now, just last week,

10. Negro women admitted into the WAVES and SPARS.

This is truly an impressive record, one which is by no means minimized by the long distance still to go. **President Roosevelt has**

FDR Fights for Negro Soldiers, Sailors

done more than any President in history to break down traditional discrimination in the armed forces.

Contrast these substantial deeds with even the double-talking words of Dewey-Republicans.

THE G. O. P. platform refuses even to promise more than an "investigation" of discrimination in the armed forces. This is but a tactic of avoiding a direct proposal for solving a problem we already know exists.

Candidate Dewey ducked away from the issue completely by saying he would refer the problem to his "military advisers." In other words, he would leave it to precisely those Army-Navy brass hats (many of whom are southerners) who are mainly responsible for military discrimination.

When viewed alongside these none-too-promising GOP words, the substantial deeds of President Roosevelt stand out in sharp contrast. It is clear that the only guarantee of continued progress toward full military equality for the Negro people is to make sure that our nation keeps the one Commander-in-Chief who has demonstrated both the will and the courage to face this problem squarely—and to move progressively toward its solution.