

Toward Freedom

Harlem's Vote For President

THE high level of political maturity which characterizes the people of Harlem was demonstrated once again in their presidential vote last Tuesday. This is evident from a preliminary analysis of the Roosevelt-Dewey vote, and of the distribution of the Roosevelt vote between the Liberal Party and the American Labor Party.

Roughly, Harlem embraces the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th Assembly Districts of Manhattan. The 11th is almost solidly Negro, the 12th about three-fourths Negro and the 13th and 14th about one-half Negro. The total presidential vote of these four districts was approximately 148,000, or about 17 percent of the total for all Manhattan.



Whereas 67 percent of the Roosevelt-Dewey vote went to the President in Manhattan as a whole, President Roosevelt received 79 percent of the total in the four Harlem districts. The President's vote was 70 percent of the Roosevelt-Dewey total in the 11th A.D., 77 percent in the 12th A.D., 72 percent in the 13th A.D., and 87 percent in the 14th A.D.

If Manhattan as a whole had voted for President Roosevelt in the same proportion as did the four Harlem districts, his plurality over Dewey would have been increased from 273,000 to 368,000.

The Dewey Republicans made a tremendous

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effort to capture the Harlem vote, using every trick of distortion, slander and confusion. Moreover, the largest Harlem weekly newspaper was all-out for Dewey, as were two other weeklies with large Harlem circulations; and the unspeakable Daily News is said to circulate close to 90,000 copies in the area. In the light of all this, Harlem's 4 to 1 vote for Roosevelt reveals just how fully the people of Harlem understood the real issues of this electoral campaign.

MUCH the same political maturity is reflected by the distribution of Harlem's pro-FDR vote between the Liberal and Labor parties. Whereas the ALP vote was about 19 percent of the Manhattan total, it was 24 percent of the total in the four Harlem districts. Whereas the Liberal Party vote was approximately 61 percent as large as that of ALP in Manhattan as a whole, it was only 39 percent as large in Harlem.

The Liberal Party conducted an intensive and sustained campaign in Harlem, blanketing the area with sound trucks, maintaining several headquarters, and mailing tens of thousands of cards urging citizens to "vote for Roosevelt on Line F." But despite it all, the people of Harlem rejected this party of red-baiters and, when not using the Democratic Party line, recorded their pro-Roosevelt votes on Line C in support of their tried-and-true labor friends.

Here is a community which probably has few peers in the nation as regards the political maturity of its citizens. This has been demonstrated many times before, especially in the councilmanic elections for Adam Powell and Ben Davis, and in the recent primaries when Rev. Powell received the congressional nomination of the Republicans, the Democrats and the American Labor Party. Moreover, as a final analysis of last week's Negro vote throughout the nation will almost surely reveal, what is here seen to be true in Harlem is expressive of a trend which is far more general.

IN THE great industrial cities of the North, and to an unprecedented extent in the South, the Negro people are demonstrating an understanding of political issues and an effective organization for political action which are of tremendous importance, not only in hastening the process of Negro liberation from the shackles of Jimcrow, but also in strengthening the broad progressive movement which must give full support to President Roosevelt in carrying through the crucial tasks of the next few years.

The highly advanced political maturity of the people of Harlem is but symptomatic of a trend among the Negro people generally, a trend which gives added confidence that the nation's goals of complete victory, enduring peace and security for all men will actually be achieved.