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EDITORIALS

Support voter registration

WITH the scent of state, local and national election activity already in the air, the time is ripe for every civic-minded individual, church, block club, social and fraternal organization to support a serious voter registration drive to increase the number of African-American voters for the important 1988 and 1989 elections.

And if ever there were two important elections where our political clout *can* and *must* be demonstrated, the next two are.

In 1988, besides the race for president, there are the races for governor, U.S. House of Representatives, the state Senate and House seats, three county commissioner seats and four seats for the city/county School Board.

The 1989 elections are certain to feature spirited races in Winston-Salem for mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

Voter registration alone, however, means nothing unless accompanied by a heavy turnout on both primary and general election days. But recent studies show that African-Americans, *when motivated*, will register and vote more heavily, increasing their political leverage both locally and nationally.

In 1984, the biggest political motivator in the African-American community was the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Political scientists Joseph P. McCormick and Robert C. Smith of Howard University attributed Jackson's success among African-Americans in 1984 to "his ability to address the range of problems that confront the national black community in the context of conventional presidential electoral politics."

In the months leading up to the 1984 campaign, African-American voter registration in Winston-Salem rose from 21,878 in 1982 to 27,909 in May, 1984, an increase of 6,031, according to data compiled by the county Board of Elections.

Unfortunately, African-American registered voters in Winston-Salem dipped to 26,309 in 1986, the same year Mazie Woodruff narrowly lost her seat on the Board of Commissioners.

With the Rev. Jackson indicating, last week, that he will decide on an '88 candidacy on or near Labor Day, we need to think of the local political benefits the African-American community can gain from the momentum generated by another Jackson presidential run.

An intensified voter registration drive, conducted by leaders in every responsible church, civic, social and fraternal group, could help our community take advantage of this political excitement generated by the Rev. Jackson. What are the potential political benefits for Winston-Salem's African-Americans?

First, an increased voter turnout for the Rev. Jackson could also help the campaigns of an African-American running for *Forsyth County Commissioner*, two or three running for the *School Board* and several running for the state *Senate and House*.

Second, if the momentum carries through 1989, it would surely benefit someone running for *mayor*.

Voter participation is a privilege guaranteed by the Constitution. Demonstrating and maintaining political clout, however, is guaranteed only by hard work, continuous voter awareness and political education. This is a job so necessary for our social, political and economic advancement that we all must share the load.

As we await our favorite candidates' intentions for president, governor, mayor, county commissioner, alderman and other important offices slated for election in the next two years, remember that we all have a role to play. When your local organization prepares its activities agenda for the coming year, let voter registration, education and participation be high on the list.

Our community's future may be greatly influenced by your decision.

ABOUT LETTERS

The *Chronicle* welcomes letters from its readers, as well as columns. Letters should be as concise as possible and typed or printed legibly. They also should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer.

We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and grammar. Columns should follow the same guidelines and will be published if we feel that they are of interest to our general readership.



Cashing in on ethnic pride

"Hope you're smiling. And, if not, remember: Every day above ground is a good one!"

I reflected on that nice thought from a nice lady named Carla Yamile Valentine. Nice thoughts, of course, associate with one another.

I thought about Hispanics. After centuries of America's attempt to kill ethnic pride and confuse cultural pluralism with segregation (unless it created a political or a sales opportunity), the Hispanic population has dealt the American myth of cultural assimilation a great blow.

Over the last few weekends, swarms of moviegoers, mostly Hispanic, have packed theaters across the country to see "La Bamba," the story of the late Ritchie Vales, the late Chicanos rock star.

"It is a film that might make a few Chicanos proud because one of their brothers was a vanguard force in the new and exciting music of the 50s," wrote one Hispanic reviewer.

Hispanic ethnic pride put \$1,005,695 into 85 theaters the first week in New York alone. It beat big-

TONY BROWN
Syndicated Columnist

budget "Superman" at the box office. "La Bamba" Rhythmic," said "Variety." It hit the top of the charts in Los Angeles.

Hollywood and white America expend excessive energy attempting to convince non-whites that their respective cultures are not commercially viable, that they can only survive artistically if they "crossover."

Crossover, of course, means that you must ignore the art forms and the people who made your "crossover" possible.

It seems that African-Americans will never get that straight, but the Hispanics are certainly on the path to realizing it. Simply put, there is and will always be a thirst for what you are.

An African-American couple on the movie screen -- boy and girl fall in love; boy and girl break up; boy and girl get back together -- has to be more believable if you are an African-American.

Since brown has turned green on the screen for Hollywood, the movie moguls will soon discover that black turns green at the box office also.

And while the \$50-million "Ishtar" with "superstars" Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty disappeared from the screens in four or five weeks, little old inexpensive (\$100,000) "Hollywood shuffle" is going strong in its 20th week.

When African-Americans are accurately portrayed, it will create a new movie genre that will capture the group that buys 50 percent of the tickets to movie theaters.

When Hollywood discovers the African-American market the way it is discovering the Hispanic market, without exploiting it, Hollywood will make 500 African-American movies for \$50-million that will gross \$15-million each, rather than one white dud.

Tony Brown is a syndicated columnist and television host, whose series, "Tony Brown's Journal," can be seen Saturdays at 1:30 locally on channels 4 and 26.

Coalition Strategy: Part Two

Throughout Black America, progressive leaders and activist-political organizers, social workers, community mobilizers--are debating one fundamental question: where is Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition going, and what should be our strategy for 1988?

The political strategies advanced to date fall into three categories. The smallest and least significant group adheres to an "anti-Rainbow" posture. Some of these activists have been burned by Jesse in the past, during his Operation PUSH stage, and they still don't trust the "Country Preacher's" judgement and motives.

They argue that the Rainbow mobilization is taking place inside the Democratic Party, which is still dominated by white, corporate interests. Thus, we should steer clear of Jackson. This is a purist approach which permits some African-American radicals to take a stance strictly in line with their ideology. But it is also a position which will isolate us from the majority of African-American working people and the poor.

Others in this trend advocate an "abstentionist position"--that instead of committing ourselves to another national presidential campaign, we should instead be working in local progressive struggles outside of the electoral process.

This approach, which implicitly rejects the electoral arena as a relevant or appropriate place for progressive activities, could be favored by some who are heavily involved in local social welfare work, and also in some African-American nationalist organizations which have never fully trusted Jackson. But few African-Americans will take these arguments seriously, since the net result would be almost identical to casting our support to the Republicans. We would throw away an effective tool to reach and mobilize millions of people.

A second group of African-American "realists" and pragmatists also condemns Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition, but for very different reasons. These big city mayors, like Coleman Young of Detroit and Andrew Young of Atlanta,

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

By MANNING MARABLE

argue that Jackson will never win; therefore, African-Americans must support a white liberal or even a moderate centrist who shares some of our beliefs, because he will be able to win the general election. So these apologists for Gephardt, Biden, Simon and maybe even Sam Nunn will advocate not just a "lesser-evil" political position, but an odious political ploy which has us capitulating even before the electorate even has a chance to select a presidential nominee.

Many African-American elected officials and most of the leadership of national civil rights organiza-

women, and people of color who have never participated in the politics of social change will become energized and involved. This means that thousands of new activists will be trained, and most will continue their progressive involvement in local affairs long after the 1988 campaign.

Although Jackson's lieutenants still insist that Jesse can win the Democratic presidential nomination, I think we have to be honest with our constituents who could one day feel betrayed or disillusioned at the Atlanta convention. A Rainbow campaign is absolutely necessary to deepen fundamental social reforms inside the U.S.-- but we should take part in this effort while recognizing



tions will be inclined to favor essentially this "realistic" response to the 1988 race, because all want to obtain political IOUs with the eventual Democratic party nominee. Their central dilemma is that Jackson's candidacy is endorsed by an overwhelming majority of their own constituents, their own marginal legitimacy vis a vis the African-American electorate.

The third group, which represents the sentiments of the overwhelming majority, rejects the first two arguments. But we are obliged to point out the benefits, as well as risks, inherent in the Rainbow strategy of working inside the Democratic presidential primaries. One major plus to the electoral effort is that thousands of farmers, the unemployed, working people, the elderly,

that Jackson personally will never be elected. The Democratic party's leadership is prepared to do everything to destroy Jackson's campaign if it climbs above the 20 percent popularity rating in national polls. The Democrats would rather lose the 1988 presidential election to Dole, Bush, Kemp, etc., if the only way they could win would be to adopt the Rainbow's entire policy agenda and accept Jesse as their candidate. What the Jackson campaign is really about is a struggle over the very nature, ideological direction and future of the Democratic Party.

Dr. Manning Marable is chairman of the Black Studies Department of Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

VERNON ROBINSON: The church and entrepreneurship

The African-American Church has a great responsibility to foster economic development and entrepreneurship in our community. This charge stems from several perspectives.

First, we have made the church our storehouse of wealth. Fully 75 percent of African-American charitable giving goes to the church. Second, because of its financial strength, the church is one of the only entities with financial clout in the community. Third, the boycott of African-American entrepreneurs by consumers cuts deeply into potential church revenue. Further, the failure to address the roots of economic devastation of our community forces the church to invest resources in programs that treat symptoms such as unemployment, drug abuse and other family problems.

There is considerable speculation about whether the African-American family can survive without jobs for our men and women created by entrepreneurship. If female-headed households reach 70 percent and male unemployment reaches 70 percent where does that leave the church?



Robinson

The church is its membership, its pastors and its deacon boards. And if it is a collection of human talent who gathers together for social and spiritual bonding, then that group can change the role of the church in the community.

The lack of support of African-American businesses is basically a crisis of spiritual bankruptcy. We hate ourselves and cannot love one another. This is the cruel legacy of racial oppression. Whites do not oppress us, we oppress ourselves and each other.

The church membership can play a central role in meeting this spiritual challenge. It must start with the young and insure that they understand their proud history, a history they will never learn in public schools. The church membership must insure that youth as well as their parents understand economics by taking the pledge to support Freedom businesses, those businesses reinvesting in the our community.

Congregations must induce their clergy to abandon the gospel of poverty and adopt one of wealth. God gave our folk 200 billion dollars to help ourselves and each other in 1984. The fact that we chose to spend 94 percent of that money with people who did not invest in our community is not his fault. A Freedom businessman can get to heaven with greater ease than a camel can go through the eye of a needle and can help his brothers and sisters escape a hellish existence in this life.

African-American church members must demand accountability from those who manage their money. Those who insist that the church's money go to institutions which do not support the African-American community's economic development must be replaced by those who will support freedom financial institutions.

About 10 percent of our churches do business with Mechanics and Farmers bank. Just think of what 50 percent of church business would mean in terms of loans and services to our community. For those of us who have been critical of the bank in the past (including myself), 50 percent of the cash from over 200 churches demands service, can change boards of directors, can change policies or establish a second viable African-American financial institution.

Our churches must use freedom businesses when possible, particularly when contracting for services. The church must also be aggressive in seizing business opportunities to help create new businesses to serve our community.

The church must be involved with economic development. Its long term survival depends on it.

Vernon L. Robinson is chairman of the 21st Century PAC of North Carolina.