

Editorials & Comments

It's Your Duty To Vote

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
In 1965, 100 years after the end of the Civil War, the Voting Rights Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in an effort to eliminate the last barriers to voter registration and thus to guarantee to every adult American the right to vote.

This 100-year period began with the Reconstruction era that resulted in Blacks becoming registered voters in unprecedented numbers. However, by 1900 the situation was reversed as Jim Crow laws and exploitation by Yankee carpetbaggers had combined to disenfranchise black Americans. Then, as a partial outcome of the civil rights struggles of the early 1960s led by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Voting Rights Act was passed.

How, in 1978, some 13-years later, blacks comprise nearly 4,000 of the nation's 525,000 elected officials. While this number represents less than one percent of the nation's elected office holders, black voters were nevertheless a prime force in putting Jimmy Carter in the White House, Jim Hunt in the governor's chair and Ken Harris in the Mayor's office. Furthermore, the black voter turnout in Charlotte last November was vital to placing three blacks on the City Council.

While these are modest political gains that blacks have had to struggle and die for to achieve, they are nevertheless gains and indications that with determination the democratic process can and will work for all people regardless of racial and economic differences.

Political Gains

To repeat, the political gains are modest, however, they are the best possible means of providing blacks economic, social and political parity in the years ahead.

Thus, it is most depressing to hear so-called black leaders pronounce the view that blacks should not vote on the liquor-by-the-drink issue as a means of protesting the city fathers' presumed lack of response to issues of more vital concern to the black community.

Charlotte NAACP Branch president Alan Rousseau stated quite clearly last week what we believe should be the viewpoint and attitude of all local adult blacks. HE SAID, "When one neglects to vote, he handover the right to others. he weakens the political system. Whatever one's politics may be, it is his duty to vote."

"It is his duty to vote," and voter intelligently, on every issue placed on the ballot because all affect the quality and quantity of our lives in one way or another.

In voting however, it is important that we use our ballot for a purpose and not be led blindly to vote on issues to support someone else's concerns. Nor should black voters fall into the trap of voting in a

certain way on a given issue because a newspaper headlines the fact that a specific black leader has announced his preference and the newspaper then speculates on how or why all blacks will or should vote the same way.

Black Leaders

There is nothing wrong with the masses of black voters voting the same way as a given black leader, provided that each voter has clearly thought through the merits of his vote. What we are attempting to say here is what we've said so many times before. That is, Charlotte's black leadership needs to develop a philosophical statement of purpose and intent designed as a framework for improving the quality of life through greater economic and political opportunity for black people. We have noted too that a primary part of any such effort should be a planned systematic attack on black voter apathy and vocal support for voter registration and voting.

Therefore, on Friday, Sept. 8, THE post urges that all black voters carefully consider the merits of the pro-liquor and anti-liquor forces, then cast their vote. To do less, would be, in Mr. Rousseau's words again, to "hand over the right to others..." (and) weaken the political system."

If there is any one thing blacks in Charlotte need it is a higher degree of political commitment, awareness and voting power. If we seriously want the vital issues of crime, education, health, recreation and public service improved, we must demonstrate this by voting our concerns on election day, each and every election day.

The question has been asked by some, "vote for what?" Our answer is vote to preserve what you have and to gain what your potential may offer for you and your community. Vote your conviction on Sept. 8.

Successful Blacks

The common assumption among many whites and some "Successful" Blacks that minority progress in the U.S. is continuing unabated into the late 1970's has been contradicted and disputed in a 136-page report by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. The authoritative report showed Blacks still lagging far behind whites in education, employment, income and housing. Disparity between whites and minorities diminished in the 1960's, said the report, "but increased during the 1970's."

Even more alarming was the finding that those Black males who "Make it" by getting white collar jobs are likely to make only 85 percent of the salary made by whites with identical experience in the same jobs.

The commission's authoritative figures only bolster other similar groups.

"BLACKS MUST BE THEIR OWN GUARDIANS OF THEIR FREEDOM."

REGISTER AND VOTE!

It's Up To You!!!

Women And Economic Excuses

by Baynard Rustin
Special To The Post

When I was a young child in elementary school, I had a classmate blessed with an amazing talent. No matter what the predicament, he managed to create a host of highly imaginative excuses. If he arrived late, as he frequently did, he blamed the weather, the roads, and even his poor mother who allegedly overslept. Because of his growing addiction to excuses, he soon scorned any attempt to analyze problems in a rational and mature way.

Excuses, then, soon became easy - though dangerously adequate - substitutes for solutions.

I recount the story of my old classmate because many modern economists, especially in America, have apparently fallen into the bad habit of preferring excuses to solutions. For example, current discussions regarding unemployment seem far more concerned with finding simplistic excuses rather than hard-headed solutions.

High unemployment, the economists tell us, is caused by too many women, too many youngsters, and too many old people seeking jobs. "If all these so-called 'marginal elements' would quietly return to the kitchens, the street corners, and the old folks homes we would, according to the new economic theories (i.e. excuses), have full employment.

These theories, which are really excuses, have always left me a bit wary, and for good reason. For decades the civil rights movement fought against the idea that America could justifiably turn its back on the unemployment and degradation of so-called "marginal groups."

In those days, as you may recall, anyone with dark skin conveniently fell into the "marginal" category.

Some contemporary economists now assert that the high jobless rates among women - the new "marginal" - are somehow natural and predestined by God. Such people advise us to look exclusively at the unemployment rates for males head households. These rates - which are always relatively low - are supposed to be the true indicators of our affluent economy.

Such a narrow-minded approach to employment policy might be acceptable to some ancient theologians who enjoyed speculating as to whether or not women and blacks had souls. But for me, it seems hopelessly antiquated, and, even worse, tinged with a kind of social defeatism. Moreover, it ignores some fundamental - and rarely discussed - facts.

To begin with, those who complain that women have flooded the labor market have not, I suspect, bothered to consult any reliable statistics. Out of curiosity, I recently looked into the matter of the "female flood," and discovered that the great flood is hardly more than a trickle. Compare to 1890, the proportion of women seeking jobs today is considerably higher, yet the increase in recent years is negligible. In 1967, for example, 41.1 percent of women aged 16 and over were in the labor force. In 1976, the proportion was 47.3 percent - hardly a mammoth increase. And part of this increase was offset by a drop in the proportion of makes over 16 who were working or seeking work. But while all this was

occurring, the overall unemployment rate more than doubled during the same period. With this information of working women caused or With this information in mind, I find it difficult to believe that the small increase in the proportion of working women caused or even contributed to the feverish increase in unemployment rates.

While it is true that the proportion of working women has grown, it is not true, as some people have insisted, that the vast majority of working women are in the labor force for ego-building kicks, or "pin money." The vast majority of women hold jobs for the same reason as men - they head families, and desperately need income for themselves and their dependents. Presently, nearly 8 million families - roughly 14 percent of all American families - are headed by women. And within the black community, one of every three families is headed by a woman.

Because of anti-woman job discrimination, as well as other factors, these families face severe economic problems. According to an excellent study by Beterly Johnson of the Labor Department, one of every three families headed by a woman live in poverty. In 1976, these families had a median annual income of scarcely \$7,200. For black families headed by women, the median income was a mere \$5,069 - not even \$100 per week.

Over 70 percent of these women work in low-paying, dead-end jobs such as domestic service, garment, and textile manufacturing, and low-level clerical work.

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL

Washington, D. C.'s Right To Vote

When the Senate voted 67-32 in favor of a constitutional amendment that would grant Congressional representation to citizens of Washington, D.C., it took the first step toward ending the shameful denial of constitutional rights to the District's 760,000 people.

The justified joy over the Senate's action may be premature though - the amendment faces the hurdle of being ratified by 38 state legislatures within seven years. Only then will it become part of the Constitution. Only then can Congress enact the necessary enabling law. Only then can the District elect a voting Congressman and two Senators.

So passage of the amendment by the Congress signified a first step, not a final victory.

But even that first step has been a long time coming. Citizens of the District have been fighting for voting rights since 1801. Voting rights and home rule were consistently opposed by powerful forces who feared control over the nation's capital would pass, in the words of a historian, to "Negro and propertyless voters."

That still is the basis of much of today's opposition to voting rights for the District. The implicit racism in the opposition to D.C. voting rights was borne out by the spurious arguments used by Senators trying to defeat the Bill.

For example, some claimed that the amendment is unconstitutional. But how can an amendment to the Constitution that changes it - be unconstitutional? By definition, any amendment, once passed, becomes part of the Constitution, hence constitutional.

Opponents made a particular obnoxious argument that went roughly: "Washington has no farms or factories and thus does not produce wealth and therefore has not earned the right to representation."

In addition to being a slur on thousands of hard-working, moderate and low-paid ordinary citizens of the District, that argument is a throwback to the days of property qualifications for the ballot. Or is this part of a new drive to allot Congressional representation according to the output of agricultural and industrial goods?

Such arguments become ridiculous when measured against the basic injustice of denying citizens the right to elected representation. The District's citizens are now taxed without representation, a fact that led the colonies to revolt against British rule in 1776. The District's citizens marched off to America's wars and many never returned, again, without representation.

The Senate vote was a special interest for three reasons. First, some Senators publicly identified as "liberal," who would be expected to vote for a measure that would extend voting rights and allow for increased black representation, played hard to get. Most wound up on the right side of the vote, but instead of being out front trying to get their colleagues to join in voting for the amendment, they coyly sat on the fence until the last minute.

Second, the amendment had genuine bi-partisan support, with GOP Chairman Brock and Senators Baker and Dole really taking the lead in rounding up votes. That kind of Republican backing for the measure has real significance.

Third, some Senators traditionally allied against black interests voted in favor of the amendment. Here was proof of the power of the black vote, especially in the case of Senator Strom, the original "Dixiecrat," whose favorable vote was undoubtedly influenced by being up for re-election in South Carolina this year.

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as i see it

The Perils Of Being A Black Homeowner

by Gerald O. Johnson

The Charlotte Public Relations people are trying to push this city off as the mecca of progressive living. The larger airport and liquor by the drink, are all indications that the city is moving progressively towards becoming a nicer place to reside. But of course, all of this is on the surface.

What is Charlotte really like deep down? Well, surprisingly enough, much of Charlotte still clings on to the days of yester year. I found this out recently when I attempted to buy a house in a predominately white neighborhood.

The incident wouldn't have made me mad except for the fact that the realtor who gave us the run around was an idiot. If he had used any type of diplomacy in handling the situation I might have taken the whole thing a little easier. But he didn't and on three separate accounts he turned down contracts on the property.

The situations surrounding this aren't important but what is important is that many blacks have had similar encounters and failed to have this matter looked into. The office of HUD

investigates discrimination charges free. Some very prominent blacks have been denied housing in certain areas of Charlotte merely because of the color of their skin.

Having had this problem and taking the necessary steps to rectify it, I turned my attention to another situation Blacks must face in being homeowners. To put it mildly, we are being drained of capital, economically.

To understand this you must visualize two sides of the housing market; the buyers side and the sellers side. The byer is the market to acquire a house and the seller is in the market to sell a house. As it turns out the market place for blacks is a buyers market. Theoretically, speaking a black can buy a house in any section of Charlotte, whereas a white has no desire to live in a predominately black section. Hence, blacks have a larger area to choose a house from, barring any discrimination, of course.

On the surface this might seem to be good and I guess it is if you intend to buy but never sell. But it is precisely because of the buyers market that blacks



Gerald Johnson

do so poorly in the sellers market. I think it is a safe assumption that 80% of the buyers of houses are white. That leaves the black seller with only 20% of the market to attract to his home. But out of this 20% over half will be seeking shelter in a non-black community. This leaves roughly 8% to seek shelter in a black community.

Even with the housing boom that is currently taking place in Charlotte, the rate goes unchanged. The white seller gets 92% of the market for homes that are

not necessarily better. This situation causes homes in black communities to sell for less than they are valued.

Marks In Their Eyes

Drink Supporters Have Dollar

Gordan Weekly, publicity chairman of PEOPLE WHO CARE, stated last week that despite all claims to the contrary, those pushing for liquor-by-the-drink in Mecklenburg County have dollar marks in their eyes. Since 1935 when the present ABC SYSTEM was approved, all so-called profits from the sale of legal liquor in North Carolina have been divided between state and local governments.

'Selfish interests are now working to bring personal profit into the picture because they know the fantastic amounts of money to be made on the sale of liquor. For example, a fifth of liquor contains an average of 25 ounces. Depending on the brand, a liquor-by-the-drink outlet pays \$5.00 for that fifth.

The problem is compounded if you have made improvements on your home. You will never be able to get your money back.

Well, this is just another milestone in our step toward equality. But it is becoming an expensive ordeal.

With 25 drinks in a fifth and selling it for \$1.50 a drink, this results in total sales of \$37.50 or a gross profit of at least 600 percent.

No other 'business' makes a profit of this magnitude unless it is the illicit drug traffic. It is quite clear why some folks want the right to merchandise liquor as if it were lemonade.

The distressing thing about the huge profit on liquor-by-the-drink is that it takes so much out of the community and leaves nothing but problems behind. In addition, well over 50 percent of the money paid for legal whiskey in N.C. goes outside the state to distillers, distributors, and others who grow rich from the sale of liquor.

When high amounts of money are to be made on anything, unfavorable and unwholesome

elements are attracted. Consider the dog racing tracks in Currituck and Carteret Counties in the early 1950's. Ask folks in that section of 'N.C. what kind of people came. The syndicate and mafia know where the fast buck is to be made and are not above using their influence on local and state governments to fatten their pocketbooks and Swiss bank accounts. It's a risk this state shouldn't take.

