

Editorials & Comments

Wanted: A New Political Strategy

by Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Editorial Writer

Last week's general elections resulted in one of the lowest voter turnouts in the nation's history. Only 37 percent of the registered voters went to the polls. Here in North Carolina the voter turnout was even lower at 29 percent.

An apparent coincidental part of this voter apathy was in the fact that the absence of white voter support was in part responsible for the defeat of some major black candidates. Probably the best known among these were Mass. Sen. Edward Brooke, seeking re-election; California Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally, also seeking re-election;

former California Rep. Yvonne Burke, running for state attorney general; and Fayette, Miss., Mayor Charles Evers, seeking a U.S. Senate seat. At the local level, Mecklenburg County Commissioner Bob Walton, lost his bid for a second term.

On the other hand, while a few faces have changed, the number of blacks in the U.S. House of Representatives remains at 16. Incumbent Democrat Richard Erwin became the first black to win a statewide election in North Carolina. Erwin defeated Republican Joe Cagle for a judgeship on the N.C. Court of Appeals. Furthermore, the rumblings and echoes of bigotry and racism espoused by Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo led blacks to vote in heavy numbers to defeat his bid to have the City Charter changed so he could run for a third term.

In addition, skillful ticket splitting enabled black voters to be key factors in the election of Republican governors in the states of Michigan and Pennsylvania and in the Illinois Senate race that sent Republic Percy back to Washington.

Mixed Results

These mixed results in the 1978 election appear to indicate that blacks are in need of a new political strategy if they are to receive and take advantage the rights they gained in the 1960s. This point was clearly demonstrated by Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson in a speech in Charlotte last weekend.

In addressing the first Annual Awards Banquet of the Charlotte Business League, Jackson said, "Economic power for Afro-Americans is going to follow political power, not precede it." He urged the League to form a political action committee and added, "public policy controls everything we do... every facet of our lives. We'd better understand that politics is serious business."

Then, as if aware of our specific local political apathy, disorganization and ineptness, Jackson said, "we are the ones who must change

our situation. No one's going to do it for us..." Thus, the Black Political

Caucus can talk about a possible mistake in endorsing the straight Democratic ticket in last week's election or we can talk about a presumed need for district representation for County Commissioners, but none of this means anything unless black people go to the polls and vote. Voting—that is the key.

The hard fact is, black Charlotteans and County residents followed their usual pattern of failing to register or if registered just not taking time to vote. Until we end this political apathy, our unemployment rates will remain high, our neighborhoods poor serviced, our children's education will be less than quality and racism will remain a constant evil in our lives.

Political Effort

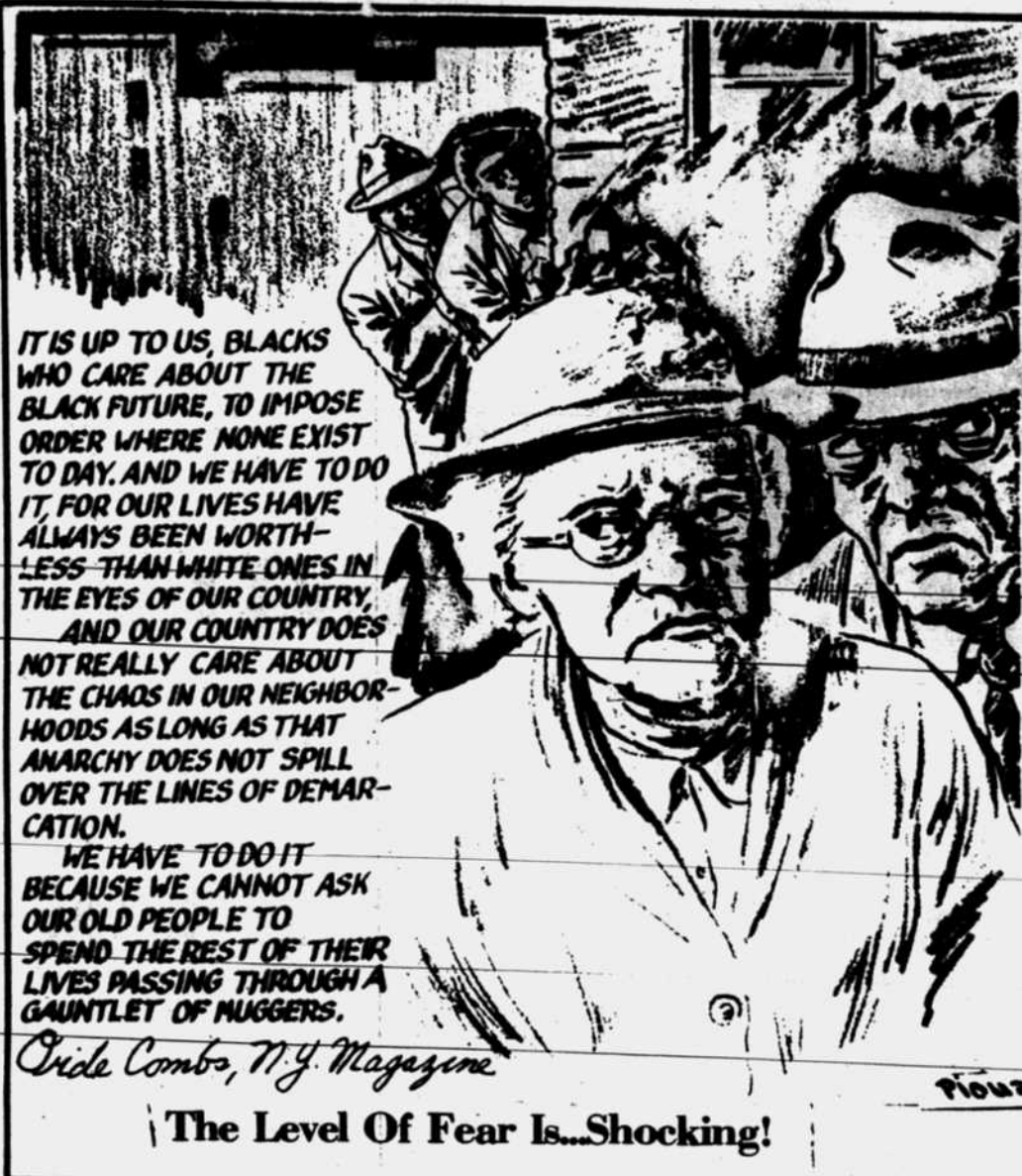
We have said repeatedly in this column that black Charlotteans need to develop a cadre of leaders who will develop a philosophical state of purpose and intent designed as a framework for improving the quality of life through greater economic and political effort and opportunity for blacks. We have noted too that such an effort must begin with a planned systematic attack on black voter apathy and vocal support for voter registration and voting.

What we are saying is the 1980 election is upon us now; now is the time for hundreds of black volunteers from every level of the socio-economic and educational level to begin soliciting voter registration on street corners, churches, clubs, bars, stores, doctors' offices and other places throughout the black community. Now is the time to begin the new political strategy if blacks want elected officials - black or white—who will respond to their needs.

A new political strategy is vital to our survival today and for a better tomorrow for our children. This strategy must include (1) long term planning, (2) an investment of money and time by blacks, (3) getting

more black businesses and professional people involved in politics, (4) a warning to black elected officials not to take black voters for granted, (5) an awareness that while elected, officials have no reason to deal fairly with blacks if we are unorganized, and (6) an awareness that improved quality of life for black people must begin and be developed by black people.

Like a sleeping giant, it is past time for blacks to awaken and begin to flex their political muscles for their own self-interest. To repeat the words of Mayor Jackson, "we are the ones who must change our situation."



Thoughts On The Elections

by Bayard Rustin
Special To The Post

As American politics become more and more confused, those of us who analyze election results need every stronger dose of skepticism and humility. I can still remember our triumphal mood back in 1976 following the election of President Carter and what seemed to be an overwhelming liberal Congress. But as we soon learned, initial political impressions—especially in today's world can frequently mislead us. Thus, to avoid falling into that trap again, I will limit myself to a few comments about several races with special significance for blacks.

Any discussion of the election, of course, must begin with the saddest news of all, the defeat of Senator Ed Brooke of Massachusetts. During his two terms in the Senate, Ed Brooke served quietly and unobtrusively. But even though he rarely made the headlines, he was unusually effective. With his close links to the moderate wing of the Republican Party, Ed Brooke frequently acted as a bridge between the two parties, constantly defending and articulating the program of the civil rights movement. And, unlike some other contemporary political figures, Senator Brooke always understood the difference between compromise and selling-out. In short, he was a marvelous Senator, and we will miss him greatly.

Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally and Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, both of them outstanding and promising black leaders, were also defeated, in this instance by a conservative upsurge in California. But even though these defeats—along with Senator Brooke's—are quite discourag-

ing and painful, I think it is important to remember one important point: all of these black political leaders were rejected primarily for political reasons, not racial reasons. Thus, we should not view these setbacks as proof of an anti-black backlash. Instead, they reflect changing political trends that seem to favor conservatives over traditional liberals.

One very important black victory—the Missouri "right to work" referendum—received scant attention from the press, even though it was an amazing setback for the New Right and its anti-labor allies. The minority community in Missouri—which was exceptionally well-organized—proved once again that a united black vote is the most effective defense against political forces that threaten the economic security of blacks. Indeed, without a strong black vote, the anti-union measure might have won, sparking a nationwide campaign for "right to work" laws and other socially regressive measures.

Black voters also had a decisive impact in several other races as well. In Michigan, for example, blacks helped defeat Republican Senator Robert Griffin, a long-time opponent of federal programs supported by civil rights and labor organizations. During the last session of Congress, Griffin voted against the civil rights movement on 8 of 11 key issues, such as minimum wage, school desegregation, and labor law reform. His replacement, Carl Levin of Detroit, will hopefully do a better job of representing Michigan's blacks.

In some respects, the election reflected some disturbing trends: the steady drift to the right, the weakening concern

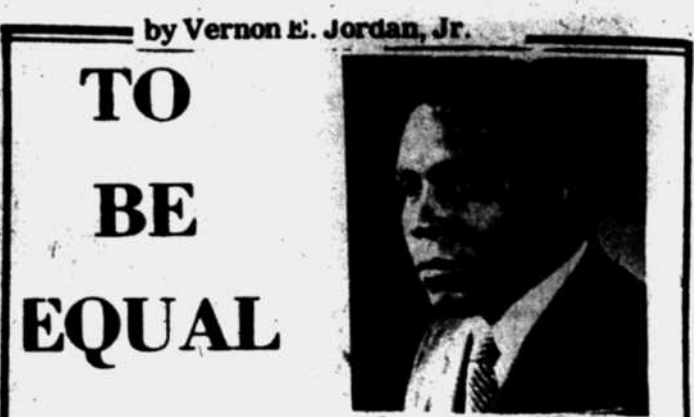
for the poor and unemployed, and the sometimes dangerous fetish for irrational tax-cutting. Yet, there is also an important positive trend for blacks. Whereas some elections of the recent past—1968 and 1970, for instance—focused heavily on racially-divisive issues like busing, and affirmative action, this year's elections had little or no racial overtones, even in the South. Such a development, I believe, is an encouraging sign for black Americans. And with the steady decline of racial issues, we can now focus on the real issues confronting blacks—jobs, educational excellence, decent housing, and steadily expanding opportunity.

60 Students Participate In Poetry Workshop

Sixty Junior High students participated in a poetry workshop sponsored by the Alpha Lambda Omega Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority on Sat., October 28. This was the sixth in a series of workshops being offered.

Saturday's workshop was conducted jointly by a group representing T.J. Reddy from the Afro American Cultural Center called P.A.G.E. (Performing Arts Guild Ensemble), and the Ebony Players. The Junior High students listened to poetry readings accompanied by a guitarist.

The workshops will continue meeting each Saturday morning from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church on Oaklawn Ave. All interested Junior High Students are invited.



Corporations And Cities

Many of the more sophisticated, advanced businesses in America have indicated their concern with revitalizing the cities. But relatively few have developed coherent corporate strategies that deal with urban revitalization within the framework of corporate activities.

Many have however, and their programs ought to be more widely known. But perhaps discussion of some things Control Data Corp. and Sears, Roebuck & Company are doing will stimulate wider interest in positive steps being taken by others.

Control Data Corp., the giant computer company, has joined with a number of other corporations to start a new company, City Venture Corp. The aim of the new firm will be to plan and manage programs designed to improve conditions in inner cities, and to benefit businesses locating there. The new company will draw on Control Data's experience in constructing and operating plants at a profit in a number of urban poverty areas.

The significance of the venture is that it is not designed to be a charitable enterprise—it's intended to be a profit-making concern creating jobs where they are most needed.

American business has not taken full advantage of the economic opportunities offered by inner-city neighborhoods. By stressing technological breakthroughs, identifying new markets and products, and by training the neglected human resources of urban ghettos, corporations can revitalize the economies of the cities.

City Venture will be watched closely by the black community to see if it follows through on its potential for creating productive jobs, and by the corporate community, which is bound to view it as a test of the profitability of poverty-area economic development.

The positive step taken by Control Data and other backers of the new company should be acknowledged. So too, should a different approach be taken by Sears, Roebuck.

Sears has been faced with a problem common to many retailers in economically declining neighborhoods. Housing abandonment has resulted in population declines that translate into lower retail volume and financial losses. The hard facts of business mandate that stores cannot be carried if they lose money over a period of years. This has meant that some Sears stores in inner cities face closing.

But Sears didn't do what others have done—just walk away. In St. Louis, Sears followed its corporate policy of seeking other uses for the doomed store. It embarked on a joint venture with the St. Louis Urban League to turn its North St. Louis facility into a Community Service Center.

Sears financed the necessary remodeling, paid taxes on the property, and turned the management of the new building over to the Urban League. The building has been turned into a center, housing, businesses and non-profit services and educational agencies. Community meeting facilities are included.

Had Sears simply moved away, the vacant building would have been a deteriorating eyesore, dragging the entire neighborhood downhill and damaging property values in a part of the city where many black people own homes.

The More Things Change, The More They Remain The Same

by Dr. Charles E. Cobb
Special To The Post

There is a new wind of racism that is increasing in velocity on the national scene. Like its predecessor it is buffeting every national institution that affects living. Unlike other times when the experienced engaged in dialogue, today only a deceptive monologue is the protective survival strategy and style. Whites are talking to Whites and Blacks are talking to Blacks. Unfortunately, those most buffeted are unequipped to survive or significantly battle the raging gale.

However, some who belong to this group have been offered, accepted and provided resources (system) which enables them to ride out the storm, while the masses are left to continue being ignored, exploited and/or destroyed. The word new is italicized in the description of this wind because in truth it is not new at all, but rather the same old wind of another time, which from the beginning was calculated to deny Blacks and other minorities a just and equitable share of national resources and services: resources with which to battle the storms of poverty and the continuing recession; i.e. adequate housing, health care, education

and those things that diminish and demean personhood and citizenship.

Unquestionably the aspiration of Blacks and other minorities are no longer a major concern of the nation's decision makers and power brokers. Minority interests are of little importance, which is reminiscent of another day. Joel Dreyfuss, the freelance writer in San Francisco, in writing for the January 1978 issue of Black Enterprise makes the following observation, "The new racism has changed its form, but not its substance and is still old and deadly." Vernon Jordan, Executive Director of the National Urban League in his address to the 1978 National meeting of the League, called the new racism "the new negativism." How right these men are as they assess the national scene, and how clearly do they see that the new monster Blacks and others battle today is the same old monster of yesterday—racism. The difference is that today it is called and described by others words and by other phrases, such as quotas, ethnicity, ethnicity, reverse discrimination, racial discrimination eliminated, lower standards, crime in the streets, law and order and many other words and phrases whose very undergirding is

described by others words and phrases, such as quotas, ethnicity, ethnicity, reverse discrimination, racial discrimination eliminated, lower standards, crime in the streets, law and order and many other words and phrases whose very undergirding is

What makes the times so ominous and perilous is that Blacks and other minorities stand virtually alone and singular in the ensuing struggle. Those former allies and friends (labor, liberals, intellectuals, Jews) of another time have deserted the cause of justice, equality, human and civil rights for minorities, which moreover have joined forces with the abiding foes of freedom and justice. They

have provided the underpinnings for the resurgence of old feelings and the new strategy for thwarting and subverting the full entrance of Blacks and other minorities into the main stream of American life. Almost every national publication of any prominence features articles by one or more of these "friends" of yesterday, affirmative action, human and civil rights for all.

There musings can be heard on radio and television in increasing abundance and regularity. There are other evidences that Dreyfuss cites

in his article that undertakes the continuing existence and practice of racism and its attendant evil in our midst. He cites a recent survey by Lou Harris that shows, "a majority of Blacks feel they are discriminated against."

He also cites a report by Seymour Martin Lipset of Stanford University, that states "Whites do not believe discrimination is the principal cause of Blacks inequality... but see Black problems as stemming essentially from the moral failing of individuals." This Dreyfuss perceives in so many words as living proof of the continuing life and vigor of white stereotypes about Blacks that is as old as time. Given this perspective, plus an innate or acquired physical fear of Blacks, Whites address that as the economic crunch continues in the economic and political arena.

They are certain that as the economic crunch continues and expands, they are the endangered species. The White scholars, politicians, white and blue collar workers, poets and peasants join forces and resist and subvert the legitimate claims of Blacks and others. At this stage, all minorities have become expendable, this is why the percentage of significant

Black owned businesses is so pitifully small. This is why Black housing, health care, education and myriad of other human civil rights and services continue to erode.

Perhaps the greater tragedy in this time of peace and the expanding gale is the non-ability, because of the system, of Blacks and other minorities to significantly mobilize and organize themselves to combat and rise above the storm. It is unbelievable that thirty to fifty million mobilized and organized folk could fail to protect and advance themselves from any and all forces that would destroy them. The gross national income of these exploited people of this nation exceeds one hundred billion a year, which is a significant dollar resource. However, these resources end up being controlled by those who dominate and exploit.

In addition, throughout the nation there are many congressional districts, senatorial, local, regional and state election where a mobilized and organized minority constituency could determine who the political decision-makers will be. These things represent power potential and in spite of the system it is assured that the gathered storm of racism, that for so long has washed out, swallowed and destroyed

one of God's great treasures, will continue and be a loss to the nation and the world.

For now, what can be said is in agreement with the sage of another day, "Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est La Meme Chose" (The More Things Change, The More They Remain The Same).

Jeri Ingram

To Edit UNCC Yearbook

CHARLOTTE—Jeri Ingram, 8420 Knights Bridge Road, Charlotte, has been elected editor of "Rogues 'N' Rascals," the University of North Carolina at Charlotte yearbook. Ingram, a junior English major, will serve as editor for the 1978-79 edition of "Rogues 'N' Rascals."



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