

Innis calls for two - party system

By Roy Innis

(From his address to the National Republican Convention Platform Committee on August 17 in Miami.)

In this fast moving complex technological world there is little time left for Blacks to take a cold, hard-nosed approach to politics. For too long we have been spectators watching powerlessly as the pendulum of fate swung leisurely between the two major parties.

We rejoiced when old Abe Lincoln freed the slaves -- and Blacks were Republicans for the next 60 years. Then along came F. D. R., who promised us a bowl of soup and a crust of bread and we swung to the Democratic party.

And nearly every Black since has been virtually born into the party captive to an automatic inheritance onto the Democratic plantation.

Thus, Blacks have been denied that very basic right which has been guaranteed to all Americans: the democratic process; the American way; the two party system. (It has always been one party or the other for Blacks, almost as if an unpublished deal had been made between the two parties to take turns at tokenism!)

Exclusive blame cannot be placed on the Democratic Party for fostering and nurturing plantation, hip-pocket politics. The Republicans must share a major portion of guilt for offering no escape; no choice; no alternative to the often patronizing solutions proffered up from well-meaning blurry-eyed liberals.

Black people are not committed non-negotiable to lib-

erals or their "isms". We are not liberals -- liberalism occurs in a state of affluence -- what have we to be liberal with? Jobs, perhaps? Money? Power?

The thing that we must be liberal about and with is our dignity! And that dignity dictates that we must belong to no one man or to his party! That we must be available for proposition! That we must negotiate and bargain for power! That we must, above all -- be men, self-determined men taking our place in American annals with the proud dignity that marks the place of the Irish, the Anglo-Saxon, the Italian, the Jew!

We must settle for nothing less.

You have heard us talk about "equality" -- that most nebulous of all conditions -- what did we mean? Equal to what? That I am your equal I have no doubt! That you grant me equal rights is what is in question! Equal rights to aggregate our strength thus converting our resources into dollars in our own communities.

Four years ago, before you gentlemen, I called for a new contract to be written between Blacks and whites in America that called for a guaranteed quota involvement in the American system based on our numbers. Today the Democrats are moving in that direction.

What about you? The case for a minority people to comprise a majority somewhere is a sound case, and where else but in those communities in which Blacks now exist as majorities. The

greatest threat to us is the dismantling of our communities, our homes, our schools, that which will doom us for ever into the lonely confines of minorityness; the lonely confines of segregation; the lonely confines of powerlessness! Based on popular myth, we may be able to our people-populate you in a few years.

That failing, we must reorganize politically so that we comprise an effective majority someplace, somehow, sometime.

There has been a lot of talk recently about Blacks selling out to the Democrat and Republican Parties... much of the talk, I confess, has merit.

Many of my brothers have settled for tinsel when they could have gotten gold; tin when they should have asked for silver; molasses when honey was just a sniff away. We must set our sites on bigger things, our dreams must become visions. We must not seek only the right to sit next to whites in their schools; we must now demand the right to operate our schools! We must not only ask for your jobs, we must seek the economic ownership of our communities. I will never sell out for tinsel, tin or molasses nor will I sell out for 30 pieces of silver.

But, I will sell out for decent schools for Black children! I will sell out for proper medical care for our elderly! I will sell out for an end to drugs in the Black community! I will sell out for the right of Black people to be a self-determined people!

Carry the message back to your leader, Mr. Nixon, the most powerful man in the

world. Tell him that 30 million Black people are waiting; waiting for him to utter the magic words of freedom; waiting for him to offer an alternative; waiting for him to make available the two party system to Black Americans for the first time!

Can I support Richard Milhouse Nixon?

Will President Nixon make it possible for 30 million Blacks to look his way in 1972? Gentlemen, I submit the choice is his!

VEP starts vote drive

John Lewis, executive director of the Voter Education Project, Inc. (VEP), and Georgia State Representative Julian Bond, a VEP board member, spearheaded a non-partisan voter registration drive through South Carolina.

The drive, coordinated by South Carolina VEP Director Calvin Harris, is designed to stimulate interest in voter registration among Blacks and other minorities throughout the state.

Activities during the three day tour included rallies, mass meetings, and speeches at high schools, colleges, and churches; and door-to-door canvassing of neighborhoods to encourage voting age Blacks who had not registered to do so. Special attention was focused on the newly enfranchised 18 to 21 year olds.



Immigration names black investigator

One of the top investigators in the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service is Kellogg H. Whittick, who has helped break some of the toughest fraud cases involving aliens.

The 44-year-old Whittick is the highest ranking of 16 Black investigators of the Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice.

In New York, where he was an investigator for eight years, Whittick was credited

with completing nearly 900 fraud cases in which aliens were illegally seeking to become permanent residents of the United States.

One of the major cases Whittick broke involved a New York man who arranged for some 500 aliens to marry U.S. citizens solely for the purpose of giving the aliens the right to remain in this country. Each alien paid \$600 for the arrangement.

To Be Equal

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

This year's election could be one of the most crucial of the century, an election in which decisions will be made that could affect the course this nation takes for the next decade or so, but millions of citizens will be robbed of their right to participate in the vital electoral process that affects their lives.

This is because the right to vote has been burdened by complicated and cumbersome registration procedures that, in effect, exclude poor people and minorities from the ballot.

The South has always been pointed to as the region that kept Black people from voting. The landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965 helped to change that, although some parts of the South still set up roadblocks. But a new research study by the National Urban League, "Abridging the Right to Vote," shows that many northern and western communities are just as reluctant to encourage full citizen participation in elections today, as the South has been historically.

It is well known that there is a smaller voter turnout for American elections than for those of other Western countries. The popular explanation for this has always stressed voter apathy, but it is now apparent that the real reason is the external impediments placed in the path of many people.

These barriers are especially significant in the inner-city and in smaller metropolitan areas. Residency requirements are among the most effective means of keeping citizens away from the polling booth. Some 33 states have rules requiring one year's residence in the state before one can vote, and most states have the same one-year rule for residence in the county or the precinct.

It is well known that we are the most mobile country in the world, but election officials still cling to residency requirements more suited to the old New England town meeting style of government. It is clear that such unreasonable residency requirements prevent mil-

lions from voting and fall disproportionately upon minority groups that have high mobility rates within states or cities.

The registration process itself is a formidable barrier to voting. In many states, registration ends two months or more before the elections--that is, well before the publicity of the campaigns stimulates voter interest. In many states, registration ends well before the primaries, cutting even more potential voters from the rolls.

Most year-round registration offices are only open from 9 to 5, thus effectively preventing working people and the poor from registering. Not many people are willing or able to lose a day's pay to register. Many cities open temporary registration offices with evening or weekend hours for a limited period, but these are open for only a few days and there is so little publicity that most people never even know about them.

Since registration offices are located "downtown"--far from the ghetto, distance is an effective barrier as well. Few cities have really attempted to open temporary offices in the ghetto during registration periods, utilize mobile units and neighborhood registrars, or make other efforts to reach potential Black voters.

Literacy tests, long used against Blacks in the South, are now used in some states, including liberal ones like New York, to keep Spanish-speaking citizens and some Blacks from registering. And many states bar convicted felons from the ballot, a rule that is said to result in disqualifying more than 1.5 million people, many of whose convictions were for relatively trivial offenses.

There are plenty of other administrative regulations and local laws that keep people out of the system when they should be used to include them in. It looks like the biggest reason not enough citizens participate in the system itself.



With Ron Hendren

A YOUNG VIEW OF WASHINGTON

THE FIRST VOTE, THE BEST VOTE, AND THE LAST WORD

By Ron Hendren

WASHINGTON--Of all the political absurdities which have emerged from the camps of both major political parties in this Presidential election year, one which must surely rank near the top is the Republican's goal, proclaimed at Miami Beach, of winning the youth vote.

No other block of potential voters garnered so much attention from the President and his advisors at Miami as "those of you who will be voting for the first time this November." That's the way Mr. Nixon put it, followed by his fervent hope that those in the 18-to-24 age bracket could later say that "your first vote was your best."

If being best means being Republican--and it seems reasonable to conclude that is what the President had in mind--it just isn't likely to happen, even if American involvement in the Indochina war is concluded before the election. And that is the one issue which, if resolved in time, might swing a significant number of youth votes to the Republican column.

The fact is, according to every major poll, that the preponderance of those registering for the first time to vote in a national election are registering as Democrats. A Newsweek poll conducted by George Gallup several weeks ago indicated that 48 percent of new voters would sign on as Democrats while only 22 percent would go Republican. That estimate is now proving conservative.

But party labels don't mean much among most young voters, and the factors deciding where the youth vote will go this year will likely be issues and personalities. True, those young people gathered in Miami Beach to support President Nixon seem Republican enough. From their ivy league suits and villager dresses to their enthusiastic, always-on-cue huzzas, they indeed presented a spectacle of which their Republican parents and Republican grandparents could justifiably be proud. But studies show that young people who vote the way their parents do are oddities or collectors' items, depending on your perspective. In any event, they are rare.

And the President was certainly within his prerogatives to suggest that his toe-every-line cheering section represented "the best of American youth." But he is way off base indeed if his campaign for re-election intends to stem, even in part, from the fantasy that the sons and daughters of the upper-middle-class serenaded him in Miami are representative of the 25 million eligible new voters this year.

In the last week of a recent five-week voter registration drive in the President's own home ground--southern California--12,664 new voters were registered. Of these, more than 9,000 were in the 18-to-22 age bracket. All but five registered as Democrats. Now, Mr. Nixon has

consistently experienced certain troubles in his home state, and California has not by any means proven an index of the nation's pulse. But five new Republicans out of 9,000 new voters should be cause for at least a minimum of concern and re-evaluation at the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

At the same time, by no means is the 1972 youth vote in Senator McGovern's pocket. Much both about him and his positions on key issues remains cloudy to date. Moreover, registration is one thing and voting is another. Polls and census studies indicate that while some 65 percent of the newly-enfranchised 25 million will register before November, only 42 percent are likely to take the trouble to vote.

Although voting should be high among students, this group represents only about seven million of the new crop of voters. Biggest by far are the nearly 14 million wage-earning young people, and these pose the pollsters' trickiest question. No one knows how many of the "non-students", as the voter registration people term them (a thoughtlessly demeaning phrase no one in his right mind would have approved), will actually make it to the polls.

For my money, I believe that a high percentage of youths who take the trouble to register will vote, and that they will for the most part vote Democratic. Part of this conclusion is based on the impressive goals consistently being met by the various voter registration drives, efforts which are likely to be equally effective come November and the drive to get out the vote. Moreover, the issues and personalities of 1972 are as clear-cut and meaningful as they have been since 1964. The sharp divisions they reflect, I believe, will overcome the cynicism about all politicians which has rightly been called the only common political thread among young people.

And the youth vote will be important. Youth specialist Steven V. Roberts of the New York Times has predicted that if half of the 25 million vote in November, and of two-thirds of these vote Democratic, President Nixon could lose eight states he carried in 1968, among them California, Illinois, New Jersey and Ohio. Should that happen, he will likely lose the election.

A far-fetched speculation at this stage of the game, to be sure, but hardly more far-fetched than the Disneyland fantasy which masqueraded in the guise of a convention in Miami. If the Republicans persist in campaigning from the wonderful stage they have set, the President's hope about the first vote being the best could prove to be the hardest words any politician in recent times has been forced to eat.

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