



We see the world
through Black eyes

GOP turns to right

The defeat of super-conservative Ronald Reagan gives the false impression of a defeat of conservatism in the Republican Party. This could not be further from the truth. Although not as popular with the extreme right wing as Reagan, Ford is still a conservative.

It would have been amusing if it had not been so pathetic, to listen to the seconding speeches to Ford's nomination. One could never believe the compassionate, understanding man who is concerned about the underprivileged of the nation described by so many of the speakers -- and especially the Blacks -- could possibly be the same president who has vetoed so many measures that would have brought relief to the poor and to minorities.

A look at the Republican Party platform brings home to us the conservatism of that party -- even the so-called moderate wing that President Ford leads.

The Republican platform would rewrite the Constitution with three amendments. These amendments -- school prayer, anti-busing, anti-abortion -- strike at the most fundamental personal rights: the family, religion and equal educational opportunities. The tax plank brings tax breaks to business, investors and parents of college students -- the upper and middle class.

The choice will be clear in November: the Republican Party and its candidate, Gerald Ford, protecting the advantage and power of money, and the Democratic Party, with Jimmy Carter, seeking to bring the benefits of a free society to all the people.

Federal law supreme

Judge Robert C. Belloni of the U.S. District Court in Portland declared orders by the courts of Oregon and Washington that attempted to supercede his injunction as null and void. Judge Belloni had ordered an end to the commercial Salmon fishing season in order to protect the Indian's share of the catch. The state courts attempted to restrain his injunction.

Although the state orders were clearly invalid, this was an important decision upholding the power of the federal government in cases that come under its jurisdiction.

We have seen states attempt to avoid federal court rulings in cases of school desegregation. If the states are ever allowed to supercede federal orders, the Black people in this country are in big trouble.

There are many reasons for the current shortage of Columbia River Salmon -- over fishing, pollution, the dams, changes in environment -- but mostly neglect. The states have been negligent in protecting the resource. The Indians are not at fault -- they have practiced conservation for centuries and have urged the states to do the same.

We are fortunate to have a judge with the integrity and the tenacity of Judge Belloni on the bench.

Mound Bayou hospital needs Black support

In this Bicentennial year, the Census Bureau reports the Black population of the United States as 23 and a half million. Many of us are unemployed and underemployed, but we have the potential for great strength. Twenty-three and a half million mean at least six million family units.

If each family would adopt each year some one specific target of opportunity, and all contribute whatever we were able -- whether it is \$1, \$5, \$10, \$25, (or \$100 and more for those of us who are in the higher brackets) -- we could greatly strengthen institutions which have importance to the Black community -- whether at the local or national level. We suggest that this Bicentennial year is a time to start. The National Newspaper Publishers Association -- the Black Press of America -- at its meeting in February made the Mound Bayou Community Hospital its target of opportunity for this year.

That small 34-bed hospital, founded and built by the Knights and Daughters of Tabor, as the result of a demonstration health project carried out for several years previously by the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, is struggling to survive. It is very important.

It was there during our dark days when a Black in Mississippi could not be sure of a hospital bed; it was there during our glory days when the combined will of Blacks and whites marching together throughout the South changed how Blacks are looked at and treated; it is there today serving the medically indigent -- those who cannot pay for health care and have no third party to pay their bills.

Mound Bayou Community Hospital does not turn anyone away. The editors of this newspaper urge you to send whatever amount of money (check or money order) you can spare to the Mound Bayou Community Hospital, Drawer R, Mound Bayou, Mississippi 38762.

Olympic Games analyzed

by Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

Thank you, whoever you are. Mrs. Spinks of St. Louis thanks you, and I thank you. You made it possible for many of us to pause momentarily and gain strength from the warmth of your spontaneous response to a very human situation.

While embroiled in political disputes, the Olympics claimed our attention over the last weeks, from the withdrawal of the African nations to the final days of the Russian threat of withdrawal. But somehow, the world completed another international Olympics. There were memorable moments that stick in our minds.

From the view of someone whose only athletic endeavor has been undistinguished participation in celebrity tennis matches, there were some particularly sentimental high points.

We mothers winced when Princess Anne fell from her horse in cross-country riding competition, probably more for a distressed Queen Elizabeth than for her daughter, who recovered admirably.

We bit our lip to keep back the tears as lightweight fighter Howard Davis dedicated his gold medal to his mother who had died sixteen days before. Who could

not sympathize with his agony while being torn between a gold medal and returning home from Montreal to pay respect to his mother's memory?

There was certainly a different light shed on the entire issue of the African countries refusing to attend the Olympics when New Zealand gold medal winner John Walker explained that in his opinion the New Zealand rugby team should never have gone to South Africa and that the African nations were quite justified in their reproach of the Olympic Committee.

There was probably no better display of the true spirit of the Olympics than when American discus thrower Mac Wilkins embraced his opponent from East Germany. When criticized by the press, he simply replied, "He is my friend; I like him."

Families everywhere identified with American boxer Sugar Ray Leonard's family and coach who pooled their money and rented a camper to drive from Washington, D.C. to Montreal to watch him win a gold medal.

And the television picture brought us the smiles of Irena Kirzstein-Szewinska's 6-year-old son watching his Polish mother on television. At the age of 30, Irena won a gold medal running the 400 meter in better shape than ever.

Grandmothers shared in the nostalgia

when Rosalae Lehmann, 66, from Kansas was reunited with her gold medal swimmer granddaughter, Kornelia Ender of East Germany. Rosalae had not seen Kornelia since leaving her homeland in 1959. Through the tears Rosalae said she would be a great grandmother in August when Kornelia's sister's baby is born.

But perhaps the high point for us mothers was when boxers Mike and Leon Spinks won gold medals as middleweight and lightweight contenders. They became the first brother team to be gold medal winners in the history of the Olympics.

The real thrill came when Kay Spinks, their mother, was sitting there in the arena as they blew a kiss to her.

Mrs. Spinks, the mother of 11 who had watched the preliminaries in her small apartment in a St. Louis housing project on a borrowed television, had received an airline ticket to the Olympics from an anonymous donor. She was able to go to Montreal to see her sons win their medals.

Just as we will remember the 1972 Olympics for its terror and tragedy, I will remember the 1976 Olympics for the kindness of one anonymous person who understood. Mrs. Spinks and many of us from all over the world are grateful.

Black political activism in perspective

by Dr. Gloria E. A. Toots

Numerous articles have recently occurred in the white press as to why Blacks do not vote. The white press is again guilty of quantifying the defining black problems from their perspective, which in my view is fallacious and at least latently deceptive.

Blacks do not need justification for not voting. Simply said, Blacks must actively and consistently become involved in politics, if our economic and civil needs are to be addressed. Tolerance of Black voter apathy subtly encourages Black voter non participation.

BLACK POLITICAL POTENTIAL GREAT:

The potential of Black political power in our nation is that of a sleeping giant. A power the establishment prefers not to reckon with if at all possible.

It is easy to capitalize the obvious as to why Blacks do not register or vote:

It is frustration with the ineptness of government to quickly respond to our precise needs. The political insensitivity to the Black experience and the failure to address issues of Black concern.

It is the exclusion or limitation of Blacks from federally funded programs by state and local government. It is the lack of awareness of registration eligibility or ill conceived notions of ineligibility such as residency requirements.

It is the fear of loss of welfare and other government benefits as the result of supplying information required for registration, such as marital status, number of dependents, and place of employment.

It is the verification of information on registration applications in some cities by the Police Department. It is harassment, intimidation, or actual acts of violence; or the hostile attitudes of employees in the voting registrar's office.

It is the lack of employment opportunity and resources essential for individual development; and the resultant attitude of hopelessness in being poor and a minority. It is the improper moral conduct of elected officials. It is the belief that the political system and all involved are corrupt; all these are contributing factors.

VOTING & SURVIVAL:

Blacks must realize that our only real means of translating our individual or collective thoughts into action is to vote. The old adage is still true: Register and vote and the choice is yours. Register and don't vote and the choice is theirs. Don't register and you have no choice. A recent black newspaper editorial read:

"We must force our concerns, our issues, our assessments onto the national agenda. We must persuade politicians and others that we are not political weaklings and that we, too, configure, that we can not only count our votes, but can apply them in such a way to calculate the political life span of those who seek and hold public office."

This is not simply counsel to Black Americans, but to Americans in general who are disenchanting with our political leaders and politics. The Bureau of Census reported in 1974 that 40 million Americans were not registered. This meant that only 62 per cent of the population was eligible to vote.

The decline of the voting population continues. With 80 percent of the nation's minorities living in cities, Black voting participation declined from 61 percent of those registered in the 1970 Congressional elections of 55 per cent in 1974.

In the 1968 presidential elections only 66 percent of registered Blacks voted. In the 1972 presidential elections Black voting declined to 65 percent.

A comparison of white voting during the congressional and presidential elections cited indicates a 5 percent decline in the 1972 presidential race. Of the 5.2 million Blacks eligible to vote, 55 percent (or less than half) of the Black population was registered in 1974, and 2.6 million of them failed to vote.

STRATEGY OF BLOCK VOTING:

The Black voting age population represents 10 percent of the nation's total potential voters, and is strategically located in critical industrial states and major urban centers, with large electoral votes for presidential elections. The Black collective voting strength represents a balance of power, that can, if voted in a block, influence election outcomes.

Of the 435 national Congressional Districts, the Black voter can determine the outcome in 120 elections, 27 percent of those elected to Congress.

The following statistics indicate the Black political potential: 28 percent of major city populations are Black, 5 percent of suburban populations are Black, and 1 out of every 3 persons residing in metropolitan areas is Black.

In 250 municipalities with populations 25,000 or more, Blacks comprise at least 10 percent of the total population, yet more than 10 percent of these cities have no Black elected officials. Seventeen metropolitan areas have Black populations in excess of a quarter of a million. The largest cities in America have Black populations of more than 100,000. Blacks comprise 32.8 percent of their total population. The 50 largest cities in America have Black populations equalling 22.7 per cent.

MUST MAKE WHITE CONGRESSPERSONS ACCOUNTABLE:

Last year the Congressional Black Caucus lost a pivotal floor fight on an African issue by 22 votes. A survey after the vote to impose sanctions against Rhodesian chrome, indicated that of the forty-five lawmakers who represented districts with more than 25 percent Black voting strength, only ten supported the Caucus. In fact, Congressman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, whose district is more than 50 percent Black did not vote in favor of sanctions against Rhodesia and its practice of apartheid.

BLACKS NEED HELP TO UNDERSTAND POLITICS

The opportunity to comprehend the political process, and the vital role that each citizen should play, has in many respects been denied to the Black citizen. Until the responsibility of involvement of citizens responsibility is clearly defined, and its benefits made apparent, political action will remain the province of middle class America and those who seek to use the system for self gain.

Blacks must realize that "politics is the science of who gets what, why and when", and that politics is a struggle not so much of men but of forces. It is the conduit for special interest advantage.

John M. Brown has written, "Nowhere are prejudices more mistaken for truth, passion for reason, and inventive for documentation than in politics."

Black political power can be a decisive factor and potent force for change. No one knows better than we that "a hungry man is not a free man" (Adlai E. Stevenson).

Black political influence has not grown in proportion to the potential number of Black voters. Black political leadership has not been an effective force for social change. The sense of urgency of Black concern is frequently lost when echoed by elected representatives. Black Americans find themselves in the innocuous situation of being scolded by government and industry for failure to have accomplished, while the very tools for accomplishment are subtly denied.

Granted there are limitations on political influence that are a product of the political system, and constraints imposed by organizational structure. These factors can not convincingly be cited to justify our difference to a legal right hard won.

Genuine self government is more easily perceived in theory than in practice, par-

ticularly on the national level, where special interest factors, usually representative of the interest of a limited number of citizens, seek power to influence government policy.

Robert M. Hutchins has said, "Faith rests on the proposition that man is a political animal, that participation in political decisions is necessary to his fulfillment and happiness. All men can and must be sufficiently informed and educated to take part in making (political) decisions."

Protection against arbitrary power, though indispensable, is insufficient to make either free individuals or a free society. Such a society must make positive provisions for its development into a community learning together; for this is what political participation, government by consent, and the civilization of the dialogue all add up to."

The proposition that a major concern of a free society is the limitation of governmental authority, and that government is best when it governs least is archaic. Our nation's poor can not condone the lessening of governmental activity to contravene the influence of power by the private sector. The role of government as an agency responsible for the common good must be strengthened. For as Hutchins said, "That government is best, which governs best."

AMERICA BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

An obligation facing America today is to assure that government belongs to the people. Recent conduct by government officials such as J. Edgar Hoover have in practice endangered this philosophy, to a results that infers that the people belong to the government. Most assuredly the proposed policy of the issuance of a social security number to infants at birth, is a facet of the "big brother" syndrome of ultimate government power over the individual.

Another priority concern for America is that economic equality be included within the perimeters of democracy. Minority concerns must become the subject, rather than the object of political action. Black elected officials must assume the function of initiating social issues, rather than responding to them, and selecting from competing issues, prioritizing them conditioned upon ultimate success. Black elected officials must become statesmen.

V. I. Lenin has said, "there are no morals in politics, there is only expedience." A preferable correlative is the remark of James Russell Lowell, "Compromise makes a good umbrella, but a poor roof, it is a temporary expedient, often wise in party politics almost sure to be unwise in statesmanship."

BLACKS ARE AWAKENING

At present, there is a climate for political awareness in the Black community, of a magnitude heretofore unknown. There is a growing perception of the disadvantages of a one party stranglehold on the Black vote, and the realization that power politics is reactive to the demands of capricious voters.

A party label is meaningless unless it purports the ability to influence. Too many Blacks, including civil rights leaders, give preeminence to general party identification, and traditional party allegiances over specific candidates. In partisan elections Blacks have failed to discriminate against hostile white candidates in voting a straight Democratic party slate, thus causing candidates and indeed the Republican party to doubt the efficacy and wisdom of championing Black concerns.

Black voters are not even prone to vote strictly along racial lines in a Black, white contest, where a competent Black is a candidate for a post on the Republican party slate.

With a national two party system of government, it is political ineptness, not to have party with both parties. In no other aspect of the Black behavioral pattern does such disjunction exist, which (Please turn to p. 3 col. 4)



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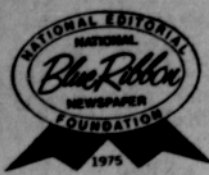
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