

EDITORIAL

BLACK VOTE LOCKED UP?

So they think the Black Vegas vote is locked up! This was the general opinion expressed during the week by one of the city's leading advertising agencies.

As the general election approaches, one notices a marked decline in political advertising in black media by a number of white candidates, particularly so in this paper and Black oriented radio. When queried as to why this decline, some of their Campaign Managers are saying that "we fared well in the Primary - we know where the Blacks stand - now we need to concentrate more on the White vote."

If this is the general attitude, then there seems to be a rude awakening in store.

One has noticed the very close vote margin in the Primary. The Black bloc made the difference. With a number of close races anticipated in the November 5th General Election, these candidates just are not able to take too much for granted. For Blacks to be taken for granted for these hundreds of years is now the thing of the past. A NEW DAY IS HERE.

It's about time we hear in the Black media how they stand, for a lack of communication and consideration will be the difference at the polls.

So - they think they have the Black vote locked up???

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

by Bayard Rustin

The controversy over affirmative action and quotas has raised a number of important issues for American society. Its critics assert that affirmative action, as currently administered by government, amounts to nothing less than reverse discrimination by forcing employers to give minority group and female applicants preference over better-qualified white males. Its supporters, on the other hand, see opposition to affirmative action as further proof of the dominant society's resistance to racial advancement. Some deny that affirmative action formulas devised by the government and the courts constitute quotas; others, however, not only acknowledge that quota directives have been issued, but also justify the quota doctrine as a legitimate method for redressing past and present racial inequities.

The A. Philip Randolph Institute believes the affirmative action concept to be a valid and essential contribution to an over-all program designed to ameliorate the current effects of racial bias, and, ultimately, to achieve the long-sought goal of racial equality. We do not believe, however, that affirmative action can or should occupy the pivotal role in a strategy for racial progress. Affirmative action, we are convinced, can only succeed when combined with programs which have as their objective a much more fundamental economic transformation than affirmative action could bring about.

We are, furthermore, unalterably opposed to the imposition of quotas or any other form of ratio hiring. Our specific objections will be spelled out later. For now, we would only observe that the implementation of a vigorous affirmative action program which has on occasion included--and we must be honest here--the institution of quota formulas has totally failed to bring about any measurable improvement in the economic condition of the black community. What the imposition of quotas, and the resulting furor they have generated, HAVE accomplished is to exacerbate the differences between blacks and other racial and ethnic groups. And to the degree that these tensions and divisions have been provoked, the time when black people are accepted into American social and economic life as full and equal participants has been that much delayed.

The basic issue raised by the quota controversy has less to do with the behavior of the federal bureaucracy, the role of the court system, or even with the persistence of racial discrimination, than it has to do with a much more basic consideration. That is the issue of how

NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY



ROSEDALE, QUEENS, N.Y.



FOREST HILLS, N.Y.

SOLDIERS GUARDING BLACKS INTERGRATING SCHOOL IN LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS.



LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

20 YEARS LATER, COPS GUARDING BLACKS INTERGRATING SCHOOL IN BROOKLYN, N.Y.



BROOKLYN, N.Y.

SOUTH BOSTON - THE POOREST WHITE SECTION.



BOSTON, MASS.

REGISTER AND VOTE

government is to proceed about the task of fully and peacefully integrating all segments of society and, most particularly, how government is to close the sizable gap between the economic status of blacks and whites.

One of the most striking--although almost always overlooked--aspects of the affirmative action debate is the fact that it has arisen during the tenure of a Republican administration which has demonstrated little enthusiasm for any of the traditional strategies of racial change. We do not see this as a contradiction, however. We believe, in fact, that the troubles which the affirmative action program has encountered are due in large part to a lack of interest and absence of policy of the Administration.

We must remember that black people enjoyed steady economic progress in the eight years prior to 1969. There were three basic reasons for this progress. One, obviously, was the passage of laws which laid the legal framework for the abolition of outright discrimination.

A second reason was the decision by the government to intervene on behalf of black people in a broad range of social institutions. Pressure was applied to employers, universities and other institutions to abolish racially discriminatory hiring and admissions practices and to make special efforts to include those groups that had been previously excluded. This early effort at affirmative action, moreover, was combined with a series of manpower training programs established to help those handicapped by inferior educational opportunity to qualify for better-skilled, higher-paying jobs.

AN IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT THIS PROGRAM WAS NOT THE PARAMOUNT REASON FOR THE ECONOMIC GAINS ACHIEVED BY THE BLACK COMMUNITY. The affirmative action effort was essential in breaking society's resistance to racial change. But there was a far more basic reason for the broad economic advancement which black Americans experienced in the middle and late 1960s. We are referring to the policies of economic growth and high employment promoted by the Johnson Administration. These policies upgraded the living standards of black and white alike. Jobs were available for the unemployed, and better jobs began to open up for those with special skills and abilities.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATISTICS

For the black community, the consequences of these basic economic policies were profound. To note just a few statistics:

1. The median income of black workers doubled between 1960 and 1970.
2. The median income of black families increased from 51 per cent of median white income to 61 per cent between 1959 and 1969. By 1970, black husband-wife families whose head was under 35 years old were earning an income 82 percent of corresponding white families.
3. The percentage of black families living in poverty declined from 56 percent in 1962 to 31 per cent in 1969.
4. Unemployment in the black community dropped from 12.4 per cent in 1961 to 6.4 per cent in 1969.

These represent serious changes. They were not produced by persuading a few corporations to hire additional black workers, although the affirmative action effort certainly helped. More important, however, was the availability of jobs, the growing opportunities for higher education, and all the other aspects of an expanding economy.

But we are determinedly opposed to a broad assault on the concept of qualifications and standards. For where legitimate standards are weakened, or abolished altogether, it is those who are most vulnerable to discrimination or whims who will suffer the most severe consequences.

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