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The emergence of Watergate as a major issue has obscured the fact that, during the most recent period, the political situation has not been encouraging for blacks and their allies. On the local level, of course, we have witnessed unprecedented advances as, each year, blacks make further inroads into the political system.

But on a national scale, we find that we are not defining the issues which determine the thrust of social policy. Those issues, rather, are being defined by the likes of Spiro Agnew and George Wallace.

Thus in the 1972 presidential election busing was a central issue, but not quality education. Both candidates spent plenty of time denying they favored employment quotas when the real issue, about which we heard almost nothing, was developing a program to ensure decent jobs for everyone. And while crime and violence affect minorities and poor people more severely than anyone else, once again our forces were not defining the issue--Agnew was.

It is small comfort that Agnew has suffered a fall from grace, and Wallace has apparently muted his rhetoric. For no matter how crippled the President may appear to be, he still retains the strength to veto minimum wage legislation, education bills, health care bills, and other essential measures.

The challenge to the black community is to take these issues and make them our issues, so that we can offer a broad program that appeals to the majority of Americans who are not affluent.

And if we are going to formulate a program that draws the support of all working people, and help build a movement that can take the initiative from the Nixons and Wallaces we must build on the organizing skills and positive commitment of the growing ranks of black trade union members.

We must go beyond the point where the primary objective of black politics is simply getting more representation. There are now more blacks and more Latinos hold public office than at any other time -- and that is a great accomplishment. But we can no longer be content with representation as an end in itself. We must be concerned with whom that representation feels responsible to. Are our officials concerned with a few more patronage jobs, or are they committed to fighting for programs that will benefit the poor people and working people that comprise their constituency. The question of who we elect is much more basic than how many.

Where there is confusion, where there is a misunderstanding and when there are a few people who are trying to misguide black people, black unionists must stand up and speak out for what makes good sense. In other words, become the voice of militant responsibility in the community.

Finally, the black unionist must take a more active role within his own union so that he can effectively tie the civil rights and labor movements together. We believe that, because of the sacrifices of A. Philip Randolph and because of the example he set, the national trade union leadership recognizes the unique role of the black unionist as never before. But it can't stop there. Union activists can determine whether the political decisions of their unions are truly in the mutual interest of the labor movement and the minority community. But they can serve this role only by exercising their democratic rights, by raising their voices and helping to make decisions on these issues. There is no other way.

Blacks Are Tired Of The Rip-off

At this writing there are many who are still confused and not abreast with the situation as to why, during the riots of the 60's and 70's, Blacks not only burned or destroyed many businesses, buildings, facilities and equipment, but also many, many homes and apartment structures.

Little do they realize that this was done to show that they were tired of the "rip-off" -- that "rip-off" being poor housing, high rents, lack of proper plumbing and housing maintenance, no sidewalks or paved streets, no rat or insect control, poor quality educational facilities and instruction, poor and unequal police and safety protection, lack of recreational facilities, high taxes, poor quality-high priced food in the neighborhood stores, unemployment, unequal employment practices, discriminatorial treatment of Black men and women in the social and cultural environment, denial of policy-making and political positions - and the list goes on and on. The Blacks were tired of the "rip-off".

Now we are faced, once again, with a very important General election, and one which will ultimately affect each and every one of us. Our vote is paramount and important to all candidates and as we exercise that right, we must be scrupulous in our selections. We must vote for the candidates who will also aid our plight- that of unequal protection, unequal treatment and injustice under the law.

Around October 15th, the VOICE sent out letters to approximately 175 Black and White candidates asking the following questions: (1) How can law enforcement be improved to protect the West Las Vegas residents and businessmen without creating racial strife and animosity? (2) Do you feel the general quality of housing, street lights, roads, sidewalks, etc. is lower in West Las Vegas than it is in the remainder of the city? (3) Do you feel that busing is the answer to quality education for all of our citizens? As of October 28 the VOICE has received only 14 responses - 50% were from candidates who are seeking an elective state or federal post. While these matters are generally local in nature, the concern of these matters on the part of most of our candidates at this point is practically nil.

See, RIP-OFF, Page 4

BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE UNITED STATES As of April, 1974

	TOTAL	FEDERAL		STATE			COUNTY		MUNICIPAL			LAW ENFORCEMENT			EDUCATION				
		SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVES	STATE EXECUTIVES	SENATORS	REPRESENTATIVES	COMMISSIONERS, SUPERVISORS, COUNCILMEN	OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS	MAYORS	VICE MAYORS, MAYORS PRO TEM	COUNCILMEN, ALDERMEN, COMMISSIONERS	OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS	JUDGES, JUSTICES, MAGISTRATES	CHIEFS OF POLICE, CONSTABLES, MARSHALS, SHERIFFS	JUSTICES OF THE PEACE	OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS	STATE AND COLLEGE BOARDS	LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS	OTHER EDUCATION OFFICIALS
Alabama	149				3	9	8	8	1	47	1	1	51		4		16		
Alaska	6				2					1							3		
Arizona	10				2				1	1			1			1	4		
Arkansas	150				1	3	19	1	8	1	54	11					52		
California	132		3	1	1	6			6	4	28	10	15			8	50		
Colorado	13				1	3			1		4		3				1		
Connecticut	50				1	5					27	4		4			9		
Delaware	8				1	2				1	4								
District of Columbia	8		1														7		
Florida	73					3	1		3	10	51	1	1				3		
Georgia	137		1		2	14	8	1	2	2	67	1	1		5	1	31	1	
Idaho	1										1								
Illinois	152		2		5	14	3		7		58	8	14			1	40		
Indiana	55				1	6	2	1	1		24	2	3	2	2		11		
Iowa	9					1					3		1				4		
Kansas	25				1	4	1		2		9		1				7		
Kentucky	59				1	2	2		2		41		2	2			7		
Louisiana	149					8	32		4	2	36		2	14	10		41		
Maine	5					1					2	1					1		
Maryland	65		1		4	15	1		4	1	27		5		2		5		
Massachusetts	23	1				5					6	4				1	6		
Michigan	194		2	1	2	11	24	4	7	6	43	17	20	2		8	47		
Minnesota	8				1	1					1		2				3		
Mississippi	191					1	8	8	7	1	61	22		23	19	1	30		
Missouri	93		1		2	13	3	1	4		36	7	10	2			14		
Nebraska	2				1												1		
Nevada	6				1	2	1						1				1		
New Hampshire	1																1		
New Jersey	152				1	6	4		8	2	49	2		1		1	78		
New Mexico	4					1				1	2								
New York	174		2		3	11	9		1	3	13	1	26				105		
North Carolina	159					3	7		8	10	95		2				34		
Ohio	139		1		2	9	2	1	8	1	70	6	14	1		2	22		
Oklahoma	66				1	3			6	1	23	10	1				20	1	
Oregon	6					1					1		1				3		
Pennsylvania	83		1	1	2	11		2			19		25	4	1	1	16		
Rhode Island	7					1					2						4		
South Carolina	116					3	18	2	6		51		12				24		
Tennessee	87				2	7	28	1		1	26		2	1	5		14		
Texas	124		1			8			4	4	50	1	2	3	2	2	47		
Vermont	2										1						1		
Virginia	63				1	1	15	2	1	8	30		1		4				
Washington	15				1	1					6	1	3				3		
West Virginia	5					1				1	3								
Wisconsin	14				1	2	3				6		1				1		
Wyoming	1										1								
TOTALS	2991	1	16	3	40	196	200	42	108	62	1080	110	172	111	48	9	24	767	2

