

# Poll Reveals Black Frustration

from page 2

The discontents of the black middle class have not made it indifferent to political differences between the parties. And this is a healthy sign which flies in the face of the substantial sentiment the poll revealed for a black political party. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents believe there is a difference between the

policies of the Democrats and Republicans.

Moreover, a similar two-thirds feel that black mayors — elected without benefit of a black party — have produced better government. In addition, nearly 50 percent of those polled stated that blacks would be unable to attain equality without forging an alliance with whites. A healthy political sense was also revealed in the poll's finding that middle

class blacks rank the labor movement and white liberals number one and two, respectively, in a list of the most loyal allies of the black community.

These results appear to suggest that middle-class blacks will continue to take part in the coalitions which are today so vitally necessary. Yet this should not blind us to the poll's alarming indication that a number of misperceptions exist, con-

cerning economic reality.

Over two-thirds of the black middle class may feel that blacks as a group are better off or as well off economically as they were ten years ago. But, alas, this sentiment is not supported by the facts.

Clearly those blacks who entered the middle class in the 1960s and '70s are reflecting their own economic progress rather than that of blacks as a

whole. According to recent statistics, since 1970 median black incomes have dropped from 64 percent of white incomes to 59 percent.

Moreover, this erosion has occurred at a time when the purchasing power of the take-home pay of all workers has been steadily declining. It is precisely this decline in the standard of living of all working people, black and white, which needs to

be addressed.

And the goal of educating middle class blacks about certain economic realities remains a critical task. Indeed, it is one of the central tasks of an effective black leadership. Needless to say, blacks usually do not find a frank discussion of their economic status in the mass media. Many of the uncomfortable statistics remain poorly analyzed and under-reported.

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