



PROMINENT MEN SPEAK OUT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION



Mr. Ira T. Bryant, Manager of the A. M. E. Sunday-School Union Publishing House at Nashville, Tenn., Says:

Mr. Editor:

In this day of "untrammelled judiciary" and "lily white Republicanism" indeed noble of our two leading colored newspapers to take such a manly stand for the rights of the race leaning upon them as their especial champions. Your brilliant editorials have in them that ring which is wonderfully pleasing to every Negro save him who has yet some antiquated, maudlin sentiment to overcome or some political ax to grind. Your broad, catholic spirit is accentuated in that you permitted to appear in your columns the following statement with its obvious innuendos and insinuations: "It is therefore as impossible for a man (Negro) to be a Republican and support the Democracy as it would be to change God's order of things and cause the sun to give light by night and the moon to shine by day. No, brethren, there is something else that has caused this indignation to come over your dreams. Will you not be candid and let us know what it really is?"

Now such a statement as that ill befits a man of the character and intelligence of the writer. Since political reward consists principally in political jobs or tainted campaign money, it is clear that here is at least

the veiled insinuation that the Negro who dares have an opinion not in harmony with orders handed down by the lily white Republican bosses, and who entertains a feeling the least friendly to the present executive of this state is not influenced by high conceptions of duty to himself and to his race, but rather by the hope of some mercenary consideration for favors rendered. But our good friend evidently overlooks the fact that God in his all-wise providence has permitted him to witness a new era and in which is to be found an entirely new Negro, else he would not be so surprised at this mighty "indignation" that has come over the Negro's dream. These old musical plates from which they have been wont to sing the praises of the "grand old party" so long that "the mind of man runneth not to the contrary" on the eve of every election through the "big-Negro" graphophone have seen their best days, and the Negro of today is learning to stand, like the white man, for principle above party. He will ever love and cherish the memory of the "departed saints" who did so much for him through the agency of Republicanism, but he has learned through bitter experience that the heterogeneous mass especially in this section labeled "Republi-

can" resembles the real article about as much as a Kentucky thoroughbred does the proverbial jackass. It's gradually dawning upon the Negro that he must hustle for himself, and he is slowly but surely learning the lesson of self-preservation. Yes, he is, thank God, beginning to appreciate the wisdom not only of Roosevelt and of Taft, but of Booker Washington himself who advise that the Negro make friends with his neighbors—that they "let down their buckets where they are. And I ask in all soberness, what thought had these wise men in mind if it wasn't that the Negro cease standing out in opposition to every thought and act of the people with whom he must live?

But as fate would have it, these "loyal sons of Ham" are without even their "loyalty" peg to stand upon in the present fight. Every candidate nominated is at heart an uncompromising Democrat, but the lily white boss orders the black bosses to order the black voters to vote for the Independent candidate, so that he and his cohort of lily white followers might ride into office on the strength of their barter; and they are really silly enough to believe that the Negro is still the fool to be herded like so many slaves and humbly marched

forth to make another payment on that interminable debt of gratitude, being urged on by the enchanting strains of that beautiful and soul-inspiring hymn, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way."

The argument about the disfranchisement laws of the other Southern states, while strong, is exceedingly irrelevant. After all the Negro is not entirely without blame for these things, and it's his quest for some plan to keep such conditions out of his own fair state that leads the Negroes of Tennessee to break away from a gang of demagogues whom he has learned from bitter experience care nothing more for him than the extent to which he can serve their nefarious purposes. No, no, Mr. Colored Boss, we are neither boot-leggers, whisky hunters nor office seekers (as your independent confederates term us). We ask no special favors of the executive, the legislative or the judicial officers of our fair state. All we ask is that we be treated like men, and that "both Trojan and Grecian be judged with no discrimination by them." Every Negro of intelligence knows that the most abusive and vilest statements ever uttered in public not only against our men but our women as well, were uttered by men who stood at the very forefront of the

independent movement in this state, and yet we are told to forget the past, to "stand with the moral issues" element, and to "line up like one solid phalanx against our ancient enemy, Democracy." They would have us believe that the "Independent Democrat" possesses superior qualities to the "ancient enemy Democracy" he has so recently deserted—in other words, that the stream is purer than its source. And they profess to believe that when the Negro takes a "sane view of the situation that he will vote for the independent judicial ticket." Well, we won't do it. Moral issues such as they represent at heart be hanged; we have something of infinitely more importance at stake. We know too well that "the devil is sick, the devil a monk will be; the devil is well, the devil a monk is he."

Mr. Editor, I hope every Negro will familiarize himself with the names of all judicial candidates on the Patterson ticket, pay his own poll tax, and then vote as big a ticket as he can for "the Governor of all the people of Tennessee" and his associates. He has proven himself a real man; let's be real men ourselves and go up or down with his ticket.

Yours for the race,

IRA T. BRYANT.

Dr. R. H. Boyd, Manager of the National Baptist Publishing House, at Nashville, Tenn., Says:

TO THE NASHVILLE GLOBE.

As I am being constantly besieged by inquiries, both written and verbal, from all parts of the state of Tennessee for my personal views on the political situation, I beg space in the columns of your paper to make one answer to all and to say to the many Negro citizens, both the business men and the religious fraternities, that while it is true I am president of the Negro Business League of this city, president of the oldest Negro banking institution of the state and manager of the largest religious publishing concern operated by Negroes in America, I am not a politician. It is true I am a tax-paying citizen, a voter and a Negro, yet I am not now nor ever was an office-holder or seeker. I have been a life-long Republican, voting for U. S. Grant in his first presidential term, and have always voted that way down to and including President Taft. I am a firm believer in state-wide prohibition and in law enforcement, yet I am free and independent in my political views, and conscientiously believe that at this critical period it will be best for all Negro voters in the state of Tennessee that each make a careful study of the situation and vote for his own best interests. I find the following inquiry in the mail this morning:

What of the Negro Voters of Tennessee?

First—Will they all vote the straight Democratic ticket, or will any of them vote it? If so, why?

Second—Have all the Negroes of voting age in Nashville or the state of Tennessee registered? And if so, can those who are ignorant or uneducated vote? If not, why all of this hue and cry in The Tennessean, from the pulpit, white and colored, concerning the ignorant Negro voters?

Third—What will be the attitude of the Republican party, both state and national, toward the Negro after this election? and what losses will the Negroes of Tennessee sustain if they vote a straight Democratic ticket? or what will they gain if they vote the Independent Democratic ticket at the request or order of the Republican State Executive Committee?

In attempting to answer conscientiously these three compound questions, I beg to state that the intelligent Negro voters of Tennessee have learned a lesson and are getting their eyes open: They

are for the first time divided in political sentiment and will, therefore, divide their votes. They feel they have the same right to make their own selection among Democrats as the State Executive Republican Committee has to make it for them. Hence all those who vote must vote a Democratic ticket and there will be no more to gain or lose politically in voting for a straight Democrat than there will be in voting for a crooked or disgruntled Democrat, for whichever party is successful at the polls will be in future the straight Democratic party of the state.

It is my opinion, as far as I have been able to see, that neither of these Democratic factions has made any overtures to the Negro voters. They have offered him nothing in the way of justice. If this independent, judiciary ticket would guarantee the Negro voter a fair and impartial trial in the courts when his life, or his liberty or his property is at stake, allowing him to be tried by a jury of his peers, as the constitution guarantees him, I would say, vote with the Independent every time.

The Reason Why a Number of Negro Voters Will Vote the Straight Democratic Ticket.

It has been recently shown by the actions of some of the chief executives of the straight Democratic party that they will at least give the Negro justice or show him mercy in his distresses. It indeed sounds strange to say that any number of Negroes are going to support the straight Democratic ticket, yet it is true, and this support will not be given for whiskey, saloon traffic or tainted money. The Negro believes, and has a right to believe that the Republican party, with whom he has voted for the last thirty-five or forty years, has traded him off. They traded a loyal Negro Republican for a disgruntled, dissatisfied Democrat, and this, too, without giving the Negro a warning or a chance to make preparation to take care of himself. In the language of another, "they left him out in the cold." In making their deal with the dissatisfied Democrats; and if the Negro can persuade the straight Democrats to allow him to vote with them at all, he will be doing well.

The Negro for the last forty years has voted against every wish and interest of the Southern Democrats in party election, has closed his ears to all arguments, and it is not reason-

able now to expect that the straight Democrats will be willing to risk themselves in offering him anything. But if it is shown in this election by actual proof that the Negro can be depended upon to be one-half as loyal to the straight Democrats in future as they have been to the straight Republicans in the past, I give it as my opinion that it will be the beginning of a better day for the Negroes in Tennessee.

As to the second question, the statistics show that not one-half of the Negroes of Nashville have yet registered. According to the census of 1900 there were about 35,000 Negroes within the corporate limits of Nashville. If one-fifth are voters, it would give 7,000 Negro males of voting age. Hence it can be seen that not one-half of the Negroes have yet registered.

Under the Dortch Law which is in force in Nashville, a man will have to have a reasonable primary education and must be well informed before he can vote. He must be able not only to take his ballot and read the names and mark them, but he must be so well posted that he will know the name of each candidate for whom he wishes to vote. An ignorant man cannot, therefore, vote with any degree of certainty. Again, unless he is above fifty years of age, he must have paid up his taxes, and must exhibit his tax receipt.

If for no other reason it would be a blessing to the state of Tennessee if every male Negro, twenty-one years of age, would register and vote, for before voting he must pay to the state and county in which he lives \$2.00 per head for each year. If therefore, the 7,000 Negro voters of Nashville would each pay into the treasury \$2.00 education would receive \$14,000 or be \$14,000 better off. If the 75,000 Negro voters of the state would register and vote the state would have \$150,000 more with which to educate its children. I think the cry that is being made by the pulpit and the alarm being given by the Tennessean and the Nashville Banner is given either for the purpose of exciting uninformed white voters or because the contributors and editors of these papers and the occupants of the pulpits are uninformed, or have failed to take time to look into real conditions.

There is no danger of either ignorant or criminal Negroes voting in Nashville. If they are criminals, they

should be convicted; if they are ignorant they cannot vote. If they do vote they must pay their taxes. A large number of our Negro preachers are doing just what the white preachers are doing—insisting upon the members of their congregations voting for what they call civic righteousness, and in other elections their congregations have voted at their request without asking why. They voted for Mr. Johns as Independent Sheriff. He could not have been elected without the Negro vote. He enforced the law, cleared the gambling dens, stopped Sunday tipping, stopped the sale of liquor to minors, but, like the Republicans, forgot those who voted with him, aiming to return to the straight Democratic Party and got left. A great number of them voted for him again against Mayor Howse, while a number voted with the straight Democrats for Governor Patterson and Mayor Howse, who have never yet shown themselves to be ashamed of the Negro voters who voted for them, hence their word will go a long way with the Negro voters of Nashville and Tennessee.

As to the third question, the Republican Party cannot blame or hold the Negro responsible for voting with the straight Democrats for two reasons:

First, because they have swapped off the loyal Negro voter for such Democrats as they could persuade to leave their party. Colonel Roosevelt appointed Mr. Luke Wright to a national position, knowing that he was a Democrat. President Taft appointed Judge Lorton, knowing him to be a Democrat. He also appointed Mr. J. M. Dickerson Secretary of War, with the understanding that he was a Democrat.

The Republican State Executive Committee met in executive session and ordered all of the Negro Republicans to vote for the Independent Judiciary, with the understanding that these gentlemen were Democrats and would remain Democrats, and they have made no promise or pledge to give the Negroes any judicial rights, or to say that these Negroes had the right of trial by jury of their peers, or anything else.

These Independent Democrats have only promised to vote for such Lily White Republicans as would hold the same opinion of the Negro that they have always held. The Tennessean, being the official organ of the Independent Democrats, has already served notice editorially and some of

their speakers have publicly stated from the platform that the Negro voters of Tennessee should be disfranchised. This being the case, the Negro has nothing to lose and all to gain by attempting to make the best terms possible with the straight Democrats. Yes, make terms if you please, with the powers that be; make terms with those who are on the throne.

The Negro will at least be in good company when he is associated with and recognized by the straight Democrats of the South. Politically, the Negro has nothing to lose by the Republicans' attitude toward him. They do not reside in any of the elections; they do not hold any office in Tennessee, state or national; they fill no clerkships except such as are obtained under the civil service rule. Only one Negro holds any position with the Republican State Executive Committee, and I am sure he cannot be accused of not doing his duty, for he is exerting himself, giving his time and spendin his money trying to keep his brother Negro voters in line, and has even gone so far as to acknowledge in an open article that there was something more than mere promises that had driven the Negro from the Republican into the straight Democratic Party. A true answer to this would be that no act performed or promise made by the straight Democrats would do one-half as much to lead the Negroes away from the Republican and into the Democratic Party as the past acts of the Republicans themselves.

In closing this statement, I beg to say that as a Republican I am glad the Negroes have divided. As a prohibitionist and anti-saloonist I am glad that some Negroes are on both sides of these great questions. I believe we, as Negroes who are going to support Governor Patterson and his ticket should support it as straight Democrats and have no fear in saying so. We who are going to support the Independent Judiciary ticket should support it as Independent Democrats, and should not be ashamed of that. We should speak out boldly and take a firm stand. All things being equal, we have more to gain in justice by voting for the Patterson Ticket. However we who prefer righteousness by law to justice, possibly have more to gain in our own consciences by voting with the civic righteous people.

(Signed)

R. H. BOYD.