

# A New Strategy Needed

That something is happening among Negroes is a fact too obvious to need argument. They live in a world of change. It would be strange indeed if of all race groups they would be an exception in responding to the changes that are taking place in the world about them. These changes find their expression in all areas of life and in all communities where people are trying to live.

Politically speaking, Negroes have been waking up for several years. Many factors play upon the situation that is forcing them to a new understanding of their problems, and a new strategy in dealing with them. Economic changes are everywhere felt. It is a notorious fact that Negroes feel these changes more keenly than other race groups in the same community. Civic privileges and political freedom will be maintained by any group at a great cost. Negroes are waking up to that fact everywhere. Political leaders of the white race down through the years have used a strategy in winning and holding the Negroes in party groups with great success. They have preached to the Negroes the wonderful ideals of the Republican party. But in far too many cases they have practiced almost everything but those ideals in dealing with the Negroes. Equal opportunity and a fair share of the benefits of party victory are things to grow eloquent about in pre-election speeches, but they are things to grow dumb and indifferent and silent and inactive about so far as the Negro is concerned after the election is over.

This strategy has worked well in the past. A few professional politicians among Negroes have been used for information and organization purposes in the hands of white politicians. By this method Negroes have been kept stranding in line and waiting for orders and urged to obey them when they were handed down with a pat on the shoulder until after election was over. Then they have been hitched outside to wait for first one thing and then another. In communities where Negroes have anything like race consciousness and race solidarity effort is made to buy off the easy ones among the leaders and browbeat and intimidate the stubborn ones, divide the Negroes, get them fussing among themselves while the other people run the show and take all the receipts.

If a suggestion is made that a Negro run for office, especially in districts predominantly colored, the stock advice is "This is not the time." If there is persistence a few so-called leaders of the Negro race can be bought off through first one method and then another to be sent out as emissaries advocating patience and whatever else will keep the Negroes waiting to their own detriment and undoing. Everybody expects the Negroes to be loyal to the party and support the straight ticket on election day, and then forthwith be forgotten, neglected, pushed aside until they are needed again. Is it any wonder that thousands have gone over to the Democratic party? To say that they will fare no better is no argument because in counties like Wyandotte in Kansas where the white Republicans take almost everything there are some Negro leaders who can say that it can't be worse no matter where they go.

There is in the midst of all this a hopeful sign. A new Negro is emerging. A new psychology is being developed. A new attitude is being cultivated. And a new determination has captured hundreds and thousands of young Negroes as well as old. All of this means that the party leaders who expect to win back the Negroes to the Republican party and hold those who have not gone will have to develop a new strategy in dealing with Negroes. A new situation has arisen. It is a desperate situation and Negroes are being driven by the very force of circumstances to be more discriminating in their leadership. They are tired of being sold out and betrayed by those whom they honor and follow. They have reached the conclusion that they must no longer be misrepresented. There is the strong belief that hundreds and thousands of white Republicans are honest and fair and just, and will be more equitable in their attitude and respect for Negroes if they can only be properly informed as to what may be the real attitude, conviction and purpose of the rank and file of Negro people. There are white Republicans who upon the basis of proper information would be fair because it is their desire to be fair. Others would be fair in sheer self defense from the standpoint of party prestige, power and success. The sooner the white leaders understand that there must be—there is bound to be—a new strategy in dealing with Negroes in matters of this kind, the better it will be for the party. Let nobody be deceived. The Negroes are awake and alert. They are developing some leaders who won't be bought nor bluffed. The people will respond to that type of leadership. They are tired and weary and sore and disgusted with the pussyfooting, Uncle Tom type. And they are done with it. The warning here can be ignored at the peril of further deterioration and loss in party prestige and power. The Negroes have their backs against the wall. They are ready for cooperation. They believe that there are thousands of others who will cooperate with them on the basis of fairness and justice; that keeps them in confidence to continue to struggle and work for party success. But a new strategy in dealing with the Negro is an imperative and an immediate necessity.