

IN ORDER to begin to understand the anger, outrage and vindictiveness that rumbles through black America with each new endorsement of Richard Nixon by a well-situated black, you have to understand first that it has virtually nothing to do with Democratic Republican partisan politics.

Black Americans have tended to vote Democratic since the Roosevelt ear, of course. But to attribute the current anti-Nixon feelings to some sort of knee-jerk partisanship is to miss the point almost entirely.

The point is this: The Nixon administration is the

first in recent memory to be viewed by so many black people, at so many levels, and in so many parts of the country, as consciously anti-black.

That is a phenomenon of a very recent origin on the American political scene, and, to repeat, has nothing to do with party politics. Neither the twice successful Dwight Eisenhower nor the unsuccessful GOP candidates Wilkie or Taft was thought to represent any palpable threat to black people, except insofar as they were painted, by virtue of their Republicanism, as being predisposed toward the rich and the powerful.

NOT EVEN the Richard Nixon of the 1960 presidential campaign was viewed as particularly anti-black.

A black entertainer who came out in support of Nixon over Kennedy in 1960 might have been warned against dissapating black voters strength, or he might have been subjected to ordinary partisan harangues.

He might have been kidded about falling for "Tricky Dick" and all that, but in 1960, "Who are you voting for?" still was a legitimate question to ask a black man.

Certainly a black man's endorsement of the 1960 GOP candidate would not have triggered the sputtering outrage generated by the newspaper photo of Sammy Davis Jr. clutching the 1972 GOP candidate, as columnist Carl T. Rowan put it, "like a hungry orphan."

It would not have prompted the boycotts that followed soul singer James Brown's endorsement, or the necessity for that entertainer to purchase four pages in the Nov. 2 issue of Jet magazine to plead that he was not a "sold" brother.

So what happened in the interim? The answer isn't all that clear, except to say that black folk have had four years of Nixon and haven't liked it.

What is involved in the negative reaction to the Nixon administration is not capable of being reduced to statistics. There is a widespread feeling that the man simply doesn't care.

To the degree that that is true, it doesn't help much to count Nixon appointments to judgeships, assistant secretaryships and GS-18ships. The Nixon record in that regard is better than that of any of his predecessors.

It is beside the point. The appointment of a few blacks is meaningful only if it is the mechanism by which the administration will implement progress toward equality for all black Americans. Otherwise, you're only talking about giving an occasional black man a good job in much the same way that South Africa occasionally will make a black man an "honorary white."

THE PRESIDENT has not appointed any black person to his Cabinet, or to the Supreme Court, or to many other posts whose policy-making function is very obvious.

It is as though most of the black appointees were put there just to be there, which is why there is so much resentment when one of these tokens touts the boss as the best thing that ever happened to black America.

The overriding question is how the President has chosen to affect what was a general trend of black progress toward full equality. Has he accelerated the trend? Slowed it down? Helped to reverse it?

The answers aren't formed by looking only at the Sam Jacksons and Robert Browns. You have to consider, too, the Richard Kleindiensts and the Harold Carswells.

An awful lot of blacks believe that Nixon's foot is on the brake, and that another four years might do irreparable harm.

It must drive his opponent mad that none of the anti-Nixon feeling seems to be translatable into pro-McGovern sentiment. As a result, Nixon will continue to win the support of "pragmatic" blacks looking for government loans, good jobs and federal contracts.

Which, of course, will continue to send the bulk of their problems into a blithering



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## The Blacks and Nixon

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