

IT WOULD BE very interesting to listen in on some of the after-hours-over-beer discussions among super-grade blacks in the Nixon administration these days.

I mean the Sam Jacksons and Bob Browns and others—men who have gone out of their way to point out to us skeptics how badly we have misjudged and maligned the racial attitudes of the administration for which they work.

One wonders what they are saying—in private—about the President's list of potential nominees for the Supreme Court. What good face can these eternal opti-

mists put on this development?

Nixon critics used to get counter arguments dealing with such things as a record number of new units of low-income housing, unprecedented numbers of black appointees, new black ambassadorships, that sort of thing.

The impression was that the public Nixon might say some things that sounded pleasing to his Southern constituency while the private Nixon was working quietly to make racial equality a fact.

Indeed, administration spokesmen had said as much with the advice that it would be smart to watch what they did rather than what they said.

WELL, BIGOTS, Southern and otherwise, must be watching with glee the President's list of Supreme Court candidates. For no matter what the President is saying about strict constructionism and regional balance, what he is trying to do is to stack the nation's highest court with people whose records show them to be in opposition to the rights and liberties of black people.

The damage that will do, if he is successful, will last decades after the Nixon Administration has been consigned to the history books.

Nor should the degree of the potential damage be taken lightly. Since the time of Lincoln, black people, despairing of justice at the hands of state and local officials, have looked to the federal government as a sort of ultimate good guy who would make things right. Blacks in the Deep South used to breathe a sigh of relief when federal officials—the FBI, for instance—became involved in their struggles. For federal involvement brought the hope of justice.

In recent years, faith in the FBI and certain other federal officers started to wane as more and more of them demonstrated that their first loyalty was not to rightness but to whiteness.

Still there remained a good deal of faith in the Supreme Court as a body of selfless, apolitical men capable of subordinating person-

ality and pragmatism to broad principles of justice.

AS A MATTER of fact, one of the reasons the Supreme Court is anathema to white supremacists is that the court has disallowed white supremacy as a guiding principle. The court never gave black folk any special break because they were black; but it did develop a reputation for not allowing black people to be abused and mistreated because they were black.

That reputation doesn't sit well with racists. And since the President perceives that he will need the votes of racists to win re-election, he is showing himself willing to remake the Supreme Court in their image.

If that message is clear to the bigots of the land, it must be equally clear to those black appointees who have been defending the Nixon Administration and talking up the value of working within the system rather than throwing bricks from the outside.

As a general proposition, working from within makes far more sense. But what happens when events and actions make clear that you have no influence within? In a contest of loyalties between justice and bigotry, not even Richard Nixon can serve two masters.

He has made his choice. One would hope that the black officials who were lately defending him would also see the necessity of making a choice.

Anytime they want to call a press conference to announce, *en masses*, their unwillingness to continue the charade, I'll miss pay day to be there.

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Nixon Woos the Racists