

were secured, it could both lead by example and provide a base for state-level

action. Voluntary sorting works in our favor. It is up to us to channel and use it

for larger, long-term purposes.



Republicans and the Minority Vote

Any crumbs left for white people?

by Ellison Lodge

As the possibility of a Barack Obama nomination was becoming a reality, a number of conservatives came up with a bright idea: nominate former congressman J.C. Watts for Vice President. It is unusual for a four-term congressman who has been out of office for four years to be considered for this position, but the reason, of course, was that J.C. Watts was the last black Republican elected to federal office.

A “Draft J.C. Watts” website and petition were set up. Conservative columnist Matt Barber wrote a column saying Mr. McCain should choose Mr. Watts because he “might attract minorities whose values—especially on social issues—are more closely aligned with those of Watts than Clinton or Obama.” The column was reprinted on a dozen conservative sites such as Townhall.com, Alan Keyes’ Renew America, Free Republic, and the National Ledger. A blogger at *Human Events*’s RedState.com also promoted Mr. Watts, saying, “it makes sense for Republicans to recruit minority candidates.”

All this ignored one major problem: Until the Republican convention, Mr. Watts was toying with endorsing Mr. Obama. No less than 87 percent of self-described black conservatives now say they will vote for him. Florida, Louisiana, and North Carolina—the only states that track voter registration by race—all saw significant declines this year in the number of black Republicans along with huge increases in the number of blacks registering as Democrats.

Among the many “conservative” blacks who say they will support Mr. Obama are former secretary of State

Colin Powell, Manhattan Institute fellow John McWhorter, radio host Armstrong Williams, and chairman of African Americans for [George W.] Bush, Yvonne R. Davis. The latter two said many other prominent black Republicans have privately told them they will vote for Mr. Obama.

Most do not pretend their choice is about anything but race. Many say they feel obligated to “be on the right side of history,” and vote for the first black who could actually become president. Amidst the great tribal rush of support for Mr. Obama among “conservative”



Julius Caesar Watts, Jr.

blacks, there are a few, such as Thomas Sowell, Ward Connerly, Walter Williams, and Elizabeth Wright, who deserve praise for consistently opposing official anti-white racism, but they are a tiny minority.

One reason black Republicans give for supporting Mr. Obama is that their party doesn’t do enough to attract blacks. Miss Davis reports that Mr. Watts thinks the Republican establishment is not “serious about capturing more than about 8 percent of the black vote.” He says that although he disagrees with the Democrats politically, “at least the party reaches out” to blacks.

Miss Davis says that all of Mr. McCain’s staff are “older ‘silverback [dominant]’ white males,” in contrast to

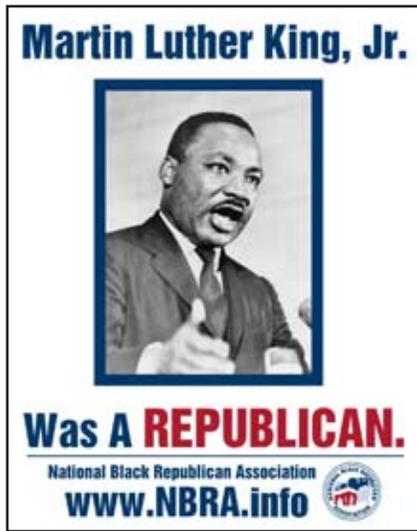
President Bush who “strongly admonished his staff for inviting the same old white guys to everything.” Miss Davis also complains that Mr. McCain is pursuing Hispanics but not blacks:

“The McCain campaign recently launched a web site in all Spanish to woo the Latino vote Bush courted and enjoyed. McCain has a formidable advisory board of Latino leaders from across the country. . . . However, the McCain website does not showcase African Americans for McCain.”

Both Mr. Watts and Miss Davis acknowledge that President Bush did abysmally with blacks despite his pandering. After Mr. Bush apologized for the “Southern Strategy,” which successfully attracted working class whites to the GOP and gave Reagan and Nixon 49-state landslides, he was rewarded with the lowest percentage of the black vote since Barry Goldwater opposed the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The NAACP ran ads virtually blaming Mr. Bush for the dragging death of James Byrd, and many blacks agreed with rapper Kanye West that “Bush doesn’t care about black people.”

Groveling did not win black votes, but it certainly helped the careers of a few black Republicans. Miss Davis, who is a consultant on “minority issues,” has no political experience, but was in the VIP box with the Bush family at both the 2000 and 2004 conventions, and got a high-level position in the Bush administration. Mr. Watts received large contributions from white Republicans hoping to have at least one black Republican congressman, and in his first term got a prime-time slot at the Republican National Convention. In his second term he was appointed chairman of the House Republican Conference—the fourth highest position in the House behind the whip, majority leader, and speaker. He also gave the rebuttal to Clinton’s State of the Union address. This promotion

of token Republican blacks whose co-racialists do not vote with them has led to the joke: “What do you call the one black man at a Republican function? Key-note speaker.”



Two of the rare anti-Obama blacks, former lieutenant governor of Maryland Michael Steele and former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, have held “emergency meetings” with Republican leaders on how to increase black support. The National Black Republican Association is raising money to help put up billboards saying “Martin Luther King Was a Republican,” and hopes to get 25 percent of the black vote.

The McCain campaign has not, of course, completely ignored blacks. At the convention, when John McCain gave his acceptance speech, two African refugees sat with the McCain family, and Mr. Steele, the closest thing to a prominent black McCain supporter, gave a high-profile speech.

Still, Mr. McCain saves his most energetic pandering for Hispanics. Like Mr. Bush, he has been an outspoken advocate for Mexicans, and though

his support among Hispanics is all but invisible, he still thinks they are worth courting. His Director of Hispanic Outreach is the odious Juan Hernandez, who once said, “I want the third generation, the seventh generation [of Mexican-Americans], I want them all to think ‘Mexico first.’ ”

So what does Mr. McCain offer whites? He shows no sign of reviving the Southern Strategy that Mr. Rove and Mr. Bush decided to abandon, and he is guilty of a whole laundry list of sins—most notably his attacks on the Confederate Flag and his vocal support of amnesty for illegal aliens. He demanded that the North Carolina GOP stop airing ads attacking Obama’s anti-white preacher, Jeremiah Wright, and he denounced radio host Bill Cunningham for merely mentioning Mr. Obama’s middle name, Hussein.

Mr. McCain has ignored the issues that are overwhelmingly popular with whites, such as immigration control and racial preferences, while promoting pseudo free-market programs like “enterprise zones” that give tax breaks in minority neighborhoods. He has called education vouchers the “civil rights issue for the 21st century,” though this often means paying for inner city blacks to go to private schools that were created for the purpose of getting away from them.

Although Mr. McCain finally endorsed Ward Connerly’s anti-racial preferences initiatives that he once opposed, since the Republican Party itself practices affirmative action it is hard to take him very seriously. Mr. Watts, Mr. Steele, Miss Rice, and Mr. Powell—the highest ranking Black Republicans to hold office in the last decade—all support racial preferences. Miss Rice and Mr. Powell both had some influence on the *Gratz* and *Grutter* Supreme Court

decisions upholding affirmative action. Mr. Powell even implored Republicans at the 2000 convention to “mend it, not end it.” When black conservative Alan Keyes ran against Mr. Obama for the Senate he called for income tax exemptions for blacks as a form of reparations for slavery.

It is therefore hard for conservative Republicans or sensible whites to work up much enthusiasm for Mr. McCain. Some are even rooting for an Obama victory, because they want to punish



Juan Hernandez.

the Republican Party for nominating Mr. McCain, or they hope an Obama presidency will create a white backlash. Some may simply find Mr. Obama more palatable on trade and foreign policy. But the fact that even conservative blacks are putting race before ideology should make it very clear to whites that they are the only group not looking after their own interests. **Ω**

Mr. Lodge works on immigration issues on Capital Hill and is active in Republican Party politics.

O Tempora, O Mores!

They Did it Their Way

In August, the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) launched a program in five US cities—Charlotte, Chicago, Phoenix, San Diego, and Santa Ana—to encourage illegal aliens to turn themselves in and leave the country. The offer was only to the 457,000 illegals already under a deporta-

tion order—so-called absconders—who hadn’t committed any other crimes since they got their deportation orders. Instead of going to jail, which is where they would end up if ICE caught them, they would get an ankle bracelet and 90 days to close out their affairs in the US before they left. ICE cancelled the program after just two and half weeks because only eight illegals turned themselves in. ICE

spent \$41,000 advertising the program, but says it saved money because the cost of keeping the eight in jail would have been \$54,000.

Critics says ICE will use the failure of “self-deportation” as an excuse to step up workplace immigration raids, like the one in Postville, Iowa in May the netted 400 illegals. “It seems to me ICE used this as nothing more than a publicity