

‘Voters’ Swing to New Deal A Political Revolution
Louis Easterling

Read the following newspaper article that pertains to the 1936 presidential election and list the reasons provided for African Americans to vote for the Democrats or for the Republicans. Record your answers in section two of Resource Sheet 2.

...Convinced by the fair play of President Roosevelt that the New Deal is for the colored man as well as the white, accepted in the Democratic Party and given more patronage in less than four years by Democrats that the Republicans gave them in fifty, colored citizens everywhere are now actively supporting and campaigning for America’s truly liberal party, the Democratic...

...The most important factor in causing the colored voters to join the Democrats in such large numbers is the New Deal. The New Deal is not an empty phrase used by politicians as a vote-getting device...

...The basic principles of the New Deal are protection, security and opportunities for all of the people regardless of race or color. Politicians have always used this phrase: every Republican President since Abraham Lincoln never failed to include it in his inaugural speech solely as a sop to the colored people for their erstwhile slavish support of the Republican party. But President Roosevelt, the humanitarian, is the only President who ever put it into practice...

In one fell swoop, the New Deal relief measures of President Roosevelt abolished this system of inequality and established one of complete equality. Overnight, 4,000,000 colored people, who were denied opportunities to make honest livings during the best of times under the Old Deal, were given not only relief, but jobs.

“No single group in America has benefited as much by the Roosevelt relief program as the colored people. It not only made jobs and provided security for the unskilled race members, but it also gave thousands of college-trained colored men and women opportunities to work in professional and technical capacities for which they were trained.”

The left the Republican party in large numbers as far back as 1928, when many of them realized the futility of voting for this reactionary party, which, for 72 years, had denied them all chances to make an honest living and to become an integral part of the body politic.

Meantime, the Democratic parties in many states had definitely sought colored votes and colored leaders on an equal basis. In Boston, Julian D. Rainey was appointed assistant corporation counsel by former Mayor James B. Curley.

In New York, Judges Charles E. Toney and James Watson, Civil Service Commissioner Ferdinand Q. Morton, Tammany Hall leader Herbert L. Bruce, Assemblyman William T. Andrews, Assistant Attorney General Harry Bragg and many others took office as Democrats.

In Pennsylvania...

In Illinois...

In Missouri...

In Kentucky...

In New Jersey...

“As soon as the Democratic party got into office in St. Louis, it immediately placed many colored persons in important positions. Now, over half of the 46,000 colored voters in the city support the Democratic Party.

In Baltimore, President Roosevelt refused to permit the construction of a Federal housing project for whites unless a similar one was built for colored people.

Easterling, Louis. “Voters’ Swing to New Deal: A Political Revolution” *Afro American* (Baltimore). 12 September 1936, p. 7.