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STATEMENT BY LINDA JENNESS
AT DEKALB COUNTY DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S MEETING

September 17, 1969

Yesterday afternoon I attempted to file for my candidacy for mayor of Atlanta. After reading the affidavit I was asked to sign, I struck out the sentence which read that in order to qualify for mayor, one must have lived in the City of Atlanta for two years. The City Clerk refused to accept the affidavit.

I have lived in Atlanta for a little over one year. I am a qualified voter in this city, and on that basis I have the right to run for office. The two year residency requirement is discriminatory, it is unconstitutional, and it deprives me of my rights as a qualified voter.

In addition, the city laws appear to be contradictory to the state laws. The state laws require only that a person be a qualified voter to run for office. It is ironic that these so-called law makers can not even manage to make laws that do not contradict each other right and left. I imagine that this is so that they can use whichever law suits them best at a given time, and then start screaming about law and order.

After consultation with several lawyers, we have come to the conclusion that it is too late to challenge this law in the courts at this particular time.

Because of this discriminatory law, and the short time between now and October 7, and only because of this, I plan to carry out a spirited and serious write-in campaign for the office of mayor of Atlanta. This will not be a routine or token write-in campaign. I have reached thousands and thousands of people with my campaign. Through TV, the radio, and through distribution of thousands of copies of my campaign literature, a good share of Atlantans have come into contact with my campaign.

My program provides solutions for the problems facing the vast majority of Atlantans, for poor people, for the black community, and for working people. I have not run simply an educational campaign -- I have run a fighting campaign. I fought in the courts against the outrageously high qualifying fees and for more democratic elections, and my campaign is totally identified with that fight. As a candidate I have actively participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam war, in demonstrations against the Atlanta Housing Authority called by the Tenants United for Fairness, and I have demonstrated against the hike in bus fares. I intend to carry out the same kind of fighting, action-oriented campaign in the form of a write-in.

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New York
September 22, 1969

Atlanta

Dear Doug,

The conclusions reached in your September 17 letter seem about right regarding the question of possible critical support to Tate's candidacy for mayor of Atlanta. Your description of the present political situation regarding his campaign indicates a border-line case in which such support would be permissible in principle, but there appears to be an overriding tactical consideration stemming from what has happened up to now.

Our mayoralty campaign around Linda's candidacy has been so hard-hitting and strikingly effective that it has generated unusual political momentum. On top of that the fight against the discriminatory election law -- with a significant victory on the filing fee -- has created an atmosphere in which a write-in campaign can be quite effectively waged. All this would be changed adversely by an announcement of formal support to Tate in his border-line case. The write-in campaign wouldn't be taken seriously and opportunities to hammer home our political points would be impaired. So it seems inadvisable to extend critical support to Tate at the present stage of the campaign.

No serious disadvantage need result regarding the keeping of close fraternal ties with Tate's supporters in the black community. Linda can continue to affirm her statement that she would support Tate if he publicly broke with the capitalist parties. In fraternal discussions with his supporters our campaigners can make educational points in support of our advocacy of an independent black party. Along these lines it should be possible to further strengthen our ties with the black community and get a serious hearing from the more advanced militants.

As to the question of what to do if Tate gets into a runoff election, I think you are right in deciding to reserve judgment. His demonstrated reluctance to break decisively with the Democratic Party and his apparent personal ambitions could lead to a much different political situation in such an eventuality. So it is best just to wait and see what happens.

Comradely,

s/Farrell Dobbs

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Atlanta, Georgia

Farrell Dobbs
National Office

Dear Farrell,

I received your letter in response to my inquiries about the Tate campaign and found the suggestions very useful.

Since I wrote to you both the Executive Committee and the branch met and discussed this question. The unanimous feeling of the branch was to support the general line of the report that I sent to you. It was a good educational discussion, and helped make the comrades more conscious of how to deal with the question of the Tate campaign when it's raised in the radical movement and among black militants.

You'll be interested to know that we have already received excellent confirmation of the predicted success of the write-in campaign. So far no scheduled appearance has been cancelled. The best meeting was yesterday at Georgia State U. to an audience of about 400. Sponsored by the Political Science Forum the meeting consisted of short statements and questions and answers from the five "serious" candidates. The three "minor" candidates weren't invited. Linda was considered one of the "serious" candidates even though she is not on the ballot. Her speech was interrupted several times with applause. The entire program was carried on educational TV last night and it was picked up by the evening news, including excellent excerpts from Linda.

Another example is the issue of police brutality which has now emerged as the major campaign issue. On Sunday the cops viciously broke up a rock concert in a city park. We called a statement to the news media the next morning which was carried on a couple of radio stations and was quoted in a front page article on the incident. It may have been carried on the TV news but this hasn't been confirmed. Her statement was the only one picked up in the newspaper article.

Comradely,

s/Doug Jenness

Atlanta elects black official

ATLANTA, Oct. 8 — A black man was named vice mayor of Atlanta today for the first time in the city's 122-year history. The elections are non-partisan.

Maynard Jackson, a 31-year-old attorney and vice president of the Atlanta NAACP branch, defeated veteran Alderman Milton Farris Tuesday in the Georgia capital's first biracial election for mayor and vice mayor.

Jackson, who tried unsuccessfully to unseat Sen. Herman Talmadge last year, trailed Farris until early this morning when returns from the predominantly black precincts were counted.

Unofficial returns indicated that Jackson had won nearly 96 percent of the black vote and about 30 percent of the white vote.

Seeks 'action programs'

The successful candidate ran on a platform of "action pro-

grams" and firm enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and fair housing codes.

In the mayoralty race, Dr. Horace Tate, a well-known black educator, ran a powerful race, finishing third, with 22,193 votes, 23.05 of the total poll. Dr. Tate was backed by Mrs. Coretta King and Dr. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The two top men in the mayoralty race, Democrat Sam Massell and Republican Rodney Cook, were forced into a runoff Oct. 21. Massell polled 29,971 votes or 31.3 percent of the total and Cook had 25,830 or 26.83 percent.

A "law and order candidate, G. Everett Millican, polled 17,481 or 18.16 percent.

Both top men will be wooing Tate voters, it was predicted here.



MAYNARD JACKSON