

Democrat election meeting in Georgia bars “non-black” press

Kranti Kumara
3 April 2019

Organizers of a meeting to introduce black mayoral candidates in the city of Savannah, Georgia, barred reporters from “non-black” press from covering the event. The meeting held March 27 to “unite the black community around a single black mayoral candidate” was organized in a church with a sign on the door proclaiming “No media (T.V. Radio, etc.) Black Press Only!” Despite the “No Media” message, African-American reporters from two local television stations were permitted in.

This meeting was organized by Rev. Clarence Teddy Williams, the owner of the Trigon Group, which touts itself as a consulting company that will “strive to help our clients develop a strategy so that they will be successful.” From its website description, the Trigon group appears to be a typical effort to cash in on connections with the black-dominated city government to facilitate access to lucrative contracts for investors and businesses.

The barring of whites from the meeting reflects the political desperation of Democratic politicians who are trying to reverse losses they sustained in the previous 2015 municipal election. They are calculating that their political redemption will be facilitated by using “race” as a glue to garner black votes.

Three black mayoral candidates are standing for election against the incumbent Republican mayor, Eddie DeLoach. Elections for mayor and for eight aldermen are scheduled to take place this coming November.

Two of the three black candidates attended the meeting, including Alderman Van Johnson and defeated 2015 mayoral candidate Louis Wilson. Both of them justified their attendance despite the crude advocacy of racist and exclusivist politics.

Johnson stated, “It’s not my meeting, I was asked to

come and give a statement, so I came and I gave a statement.” Similarly, Wilson dismissed his attendance with the words, “I didn’t plan the meeting so I can’t comment on that part.”

The only mayoral candidate who did not attend was the city council representative Regina Thomas. She claimed to be an inclusive candidate and stated to the press that she will win the upcoming elections even if there is another black candidate against the incumbent Republican mayor, who is white.

Savannah is the oldest city in Georgia and was set up in the year 1733 by James Edward Oglethorpe, who as a representative of England’s King George II, named the region around it as Georgia, the thirteenth and the last British colony on North American soil.

Savannah’s population today numbers around 145,000, with about 55 percent African-Americans, who generally vote Democratic when they participate in elections. Poverty is rampant in this city, and even according to official statistics, more than 25 percent of the population are poor. Median household income amounts to a mere \$37,000.

The municipal government had been dominated by the Democrats since 1991, but that changed in 2015 when the incumbent Edna Jackson, Savannah’s first black female mayor, lost to conservative businessman and Republican Eddie DeLoach, who ran a law-and-order campaign focusing on crime fueled by deepening poverty.

Jackson had the dubious distinction of becoming the first incumbent mayor defeated in the city in 20 years, despite the “black leadership” of the local Democratic Party apparatus uniting behind her. Two other black female Democrats on the board of aldermen lost their seats to conservative white Republicans.

The political issues facing workers in Savannah, and

everywhere in America, include poverty, raising wages, and providing access to health care and education. But the corrupt upper-middle-class African-American politicians in the Democratic Party have no program on such issues.

Unable, as a capitalist party, to offer any genuine measures of reform to the impoverished workers of all races in Savannah, the local Democrats are seizing on the issue of race as a weapon, calling on black voters to defeat “white Republicans.”

Out of this orientation came the “black press only” decree at the campaign meeting, which recalls the bitter history—barely a half century ago—when thousands of black workers and youth, and their white supporters, engaged in years of bitter struggle against racial segregation in Georgia and across the South.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact