Candidacy Official: Jackson's 'Rainbow' Politics Move Center Stage
By Frances M. Beal

Riding the upsurge of political energy sweeping Black communities throughout the country, Jesse Jackson finally made it official: The formal announcement of his candidacy for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination
At a November 3 Washington, D.C., press conference, the new dynamic Jackson has injected into the 1984 election campaign to front pages and television screens throughout the country.

Ever since the announcement, Jackson has been making substantial political waves. But now with direct access to the national stage, the former splinter party's new, more prominent right into the center of national political debate. Every candidate and political activist who comes into contact with the crusading Jackson raises—and the entire electorate will be aware of their responses. Second, both the substance and the symbols of Jackson's bid can serve as a mobilizing force, bringing millions of Blacks and other disenfranchised sectors of the population into political motion in both the general and the voting booth in particular. Third, if the potential is tapped, the Jackson candidacy will have far-reaching effects, not only on the 1984 election, but on the future of U.S. political life for some time to come.

JACKSON'S PLATFORM

In announcing his candidacy, Jackson once again aired the essential reformation of his campaign: "The Reagan administration has turned its back on civil rights, human rights and the poor—both in this country and in the world...[and] regrettably, the Democratic Party and its leaders have remained too quiet and too passive in the face of these outrages."

Jackson stressed the issues of unemployment, poverty, and inadequate studies for big corporations and wealthy individuals, the dearth of civil rights enforcement machinery, and setbacks in needed welfare programs. He took the Reagan administration to task for supporting repressive regimes in "South Africa, the Philippines and El Salvador" and sending U.S. soldiers to "die needlessly on foreign battlefields in undeclared wars."

Prominent position papers on all major issues in the days ahead, Jackson outlined in broad strokes a platform of employment, tax reform, and a reduction in the arms race."

He also is pro-choice and advocates democratic economic reform. His campaign is focused on issues, not personalities.

Even on paper, Jackson has already projected a campaign considerably to the left of the other Democratic Party aspirants. But what particularly distinguishes the Jackson bid is its explicit determination to base itself in the poor, specially oppressed, and underrepresented sectors of U.S. society, and to bring their concerns and interests into the mainstream of political debate. Stating that "there is a gap between the announcement candidates and the masses," Jackson has set out to mobilize the Black community and to forge around it a broad and progressive "Rainbow Coalition" of the dispossessed. This goal transcends any particular plank in Jackson's program, and actually lies at the heart of his campaign effort.

That Jesse Jackson should be the individual who now occupies the role point in bringing this progressive program before the entire country has been an understandable cause of concern among many progressives in the Black community and elsewhere. His history of political zigzags and personal ambition, especially now that he has entered an arena where the pressure to vacillate or surrender of key aspects of his programmatic considerations will be, is troubling. But, however, Jackson has been accountable to its targeted constituency and his campaign has bowed to a consistently progressive course.

Jackson's success in projecting the main components of his platform before a broad, national audience has already impacted the political terrain on which the struggle for the Democratic presidential nod will be fought. Even before the official announcement, stories about his candidacy appeared in Newsweek and Time, coverage of his Washington, D.C., press conference was as extensive as that accorded former Vice-President Walter Mondale and Sen. John Glenn, and greater than that given any of the other announced candidates. The heightened visibility of Jackson's program and the "Rainbow Coalition" it speaks for has clearly denied the attempt to ghettoize the campaign by categorizing him solely as the "Black candidate." Jackson himself

Mondale
Endorsement
Splits Chicago Democrats
By Robert Sellers

CHICAGO

Despite the opposition of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington and other leading Black Democrats, the Cook County Democratic Party Central Committee endorsed Walter Mondale for the presidency on October 29.

The vote was engineered by Cook County Democratic Party Chairman Edward Vrdolyak, head of the racist wing of the Chicago party and the main political obstacle in the city council to the reform measures of the Washington administration. Vrdolyak lined up 59 of 78 county ward and township committeemen to vote for the endorsement, but this total did not include a single one of the 15 Black ward leaders on the central committee.

Mondale had been courting Vrdolyak for weeks for an early endorsement, thinking that the stamp of approval of the county party organization would influence conservative voters in white, ethnic neighborhoods who are leaning toward Sen. John Glenn.

Black party leaders, including Mayor Washington, opposed the early endorsement of Mondale, arguing that the party should wait for Jesse Jackson's official declaration of candidacy before deciding who to support. But the main reason these forces fought militantly to prevent the move was the blatantly opportunist alliance being forged between Mondale and Vrdolyak.

Mondale's strategists figure that Black voters will have no choice about supporting their man against Reagan no matter what sort of deals he cuts with right-wing Democrats. However, this approach only strengthens the hand of black, racist forces at the local level and is extremely likely to make effective mobilization of Black voices difficult if not impossible. Recognizing the dangers of the Mondale-Vrdolyak alliance, two Chicago independent Democratic congressmen, Charles Hayes and Gus Savage (both members of the Congressional Black Caucus), took the leadership in opposing the Mondale endorsement of the Central Committee. "We are being torn apart by a leadership which continues to support an attack on our democratic principles," said the congressmen in a joint statement issued at a rally of 700 Washington supporters.

The present Cook County chairman injected racism into the recent mayoral campaign. Vrdolyak ran as a Republican candidate for mayor in the general election. He has worked unceasingly to stalemante the city government. Edward R. Vrdolyak must be ousted as Chairman of the Cook County central committee.
Ed Koch: Architect of Racist Politics

By Rachelle Kwanowski

NEW YORK

To paraphrase the TV commercial, with Ed Koch, you don’t lose the politicians listen. They have to.

The mayor of New York is, by definition, a politician. As the representative of the nation’s most populous city, the finance and communications hub of the nation, he must exploit an impact that register far beyond New York’s five boroughs. Thus, when New York positions himself—as Koch has done—on the right side of the Democratic Party and is openly identified with his own image, his activities are a matter of interest to the entire working class.

Never公益活动, Ed Koch has received an unusual share of media attention in recent months. In July, he tangled with several large congressional groups, charging that their investigation into charges of police brutality in New York were unfounded and “politically motivated.” In August, he went to San Francisco to deliver a highly touted speech before the convention of the National Urban League, in which he warned the Democratic Party to stop “catering to special interests,” that it had become “the party of minorities and women—and calling on it to return to the issues that concerned ordinary Americans.” Most recently, in September, at the height of the hysteria over the downing of the South Korean airliner by the North Korean government, Koch again made the headlines by calling the United Nations “a cesspool” in what was an obvious attempt to keep the issue out of the hands of the countries and the nonaligned movement in the world body.

Framing the 1984 congressional campaign is two upcoming political events: the 1984 presidential election and the 1985 mayoral election. Concerning the 1984 presidential election, Koch is trying to stake out a claim as a Democratic Party powerbroker and a potential presidential candidate, in the event of Carter’s re-election. Concerning 1985, Koch is already preparing his defense against the increasing assault on his power base in Chicago and Boston, which would be rooted in New York’s substantial minority communities.

Is Koch working to unify—you and me, and what makes that so dangerous?

EVOLUTION OF A “LIBERAL”

Traditionally the mayor of New York City is a “liberal,” and Koch was no exception.Racially, he was a product of the white liberal political alliance, in which the reformer Mayor Wagner was followed by Mayor Dewey, and the Kennedy administration. As mayor, Koch drifted rightward during his tenure in Congress and came full circle with the hard-right conservative wing, and consequently, his mayoralty, won in 1977.

Today he is back on a radical reactionaries, where again, New York’s minority communities, viewed with alarm by much of the labor movement in the city and something of an embarrassment to New York’s liberal intellectuals. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie see him as an asset to business and a grade-A mayor.

Koch’s standing with the powerful centers of the city’s political and economic life, is based on two accomplishments: he bailed out the city out of its mid-70’s financial crisis by imposing a two-year wage and price freeze, and a program of racial and anti-union assaults which were, in many ways, the forerunners of the Reagan administration: When he took office, and he has succeeded in forging a highly racialized, cross-class coalition. He is helped by a bureaucracy of black and white officials who comprise the bulk of the most stable sectors of the working class and petitbourgeoisie.

Since this perspective is at the heart of Koch’s formula for the Democratic Party nationally, it is worth examining more closely.

Koch’s greatest success in New York, which has earned him the respect of financial capital, was to engineer the city’s fiscal recovery. In 1977 a city testing on the brink of default, Koch has managed to eradicate the budget deficit and restore the city’s viability in the municipal bond market. Koch achieved this “miraculous” turnaround through a non-unionized labor and a conscious program of racialized cutbacks in city social expenditures. In 1977, 1 out of every 14 city employees was in a racialized program of social welfare. In 1984, the number of municipal workers has decreased by 40%, “last-hired, first-fired” workers bearing the brunt of the lay-offs. In the face of strikes called by the Amalgamated Human Service Workers Union and a number of the police service workers, Koch rallied behind the public’s against “duplication of services” reduced the number of beds in city hospitals by half and closed many hospitals, and clinics serving Harlem Bedford-Stuyvesant and other minority enclaves. Dismantling bilingual education programs is part of a policy of racist neglect of the city’s public school system, which has largely been abandoned by whites.

BUILDING A RACIAL SOCIOECONOMIC BASE

While the primary victims of Koch’s policy of “racial reform” have been the largely middle- and upper-class white residents of the city, those in the minority communities in the city, who have been shored up since the worst of the social and economic deterioration of New York’s middle class, whites have consciously been sheltered from the worst of the social and economic deterioration. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that those “mainstream” whites would rally behind Koch’s program with a “let them eat ice” tone, across their banners.

The inherent racism of Koch’s fiscal and social policies has been complemented by his explicit support of white supremacy. Under Koch’s leadership, the city has filed numerous court actions opposing federally mandated quotas of minority workers in the schools, on construction sites, or in the police and fire departments. The mayor has become a demagogue proponent of the myth of “reverse discrimination” and points to the achievements of white ethnic groups over the generations as evidence of greater ability rather than privileged access and opportunity.

The most volatile component of his program, the war cry against crime, is a war against the black neighborhood, racist. Koch exalted himself as the defender of the “rights of society” (read whites), opposed to the “criminals” (read blacks and other minorities). As a vociferous advocate of the death penalty, Koch has made a repu-tation as a ruler in the Big Apple. He was con-sidered, when the other hand, when he indicated that white vigilantes bludgeoned to death Willie Turks, a black transit worker, yet nothing was done. He has been accused of being racist when he explained that whites who “defend themselves” against “criminal elements”.

Thus, in a racist ideological context with himself as its chief political representative in New York is not to be unseat. In 1981 he was accorded both the Democratic and the Republican Party nominations and won re-election handily. Now he believes that the Democratic Party can duplicate this feat on a national scale.

FORMULA FOR THE “MAINSTREAM”

Calling his strategy to “reunite . . . the great mainstream of America,” Koch spells out what that color-coded “mainstream” policy is going to mean once you get over the race. He doesn’t have to. It’s enough for him to say, concerning the Democratic Party, that “There are the steelworkers from Youngstown! The farmers from the corn belt! The people from South Miami Beach! The wives and mothers from Brooklyin! The car dealers from Rich mond! The forces sent from Colorado Springs! The office workers, the doctors, the dentists, the small bus-inesses that formed the party’s broad and stable base.”

Koch’s idea of how to bring this “mainstream” policy to the streets of New York City, to the re-election of the Democratic Party is a program which rejects “special treat-ment” (affirmative action, quotas, etc.) for minorities, eases the tax burden on the middle class (requiring cuts in social se rvices for the poor), and wages the war on the police, curbing and bolstering the police, cutting the legal rights of defendants, and more extensively utilizing capital punishment.

FOREIGN POLICY

Koch’s advice to the Democratic Party on foreign policy is that of a party in a reactionary domestic program. “We are allowing ourselves to be seen as a party that dismisses the very real threats to peace and democratic values to which the present administration, however clumsy, is attempting to respond.”

From this perspective, Koch advocates a Reagan-type budget for the military and an internationalist policy with the Soviet Union everywhere in the world. His unbridled anti-Semitism is matched only by his enthusiastic support for all of the First World War policies. Outraged that some Zionists expressed support for a peaceful solution at Sabra and Shatila last year, Koch lambasted them for having “knuckled-under.”

Koch’s new national assertiveness is aimed at countering the conspicuous lack of foreign policy leadership by the Democratic Party through the political upsurge in minority communities. That upsurge par-ticularly the black movement within the city mayors like Koch who preside over major urban centers with sizeable minority electorates.

“DUMP KOCH” CAMPAIGN

On the surface, Koch’s own political position is that New York might opt for the non-partisan slate of candidates or above the Democratic Party. The real reason for a “Dumpt Koch” campaign mounted behind the progressive candidacy of Frank Barbaro downplayed the struggle against racism and thus failed to galvanize a minority electorate which has tradition ally stayed away from the polls. It is already clear that an upsurge in voter move ment in 1985 will not fall into the same dead-end track.

With large numbers of New York Blacks likely to register this year as a result of Jesse Jackson’s presidential cam-paign, prospects for an anti-Koch coal ition rooted in the Black and Puerto Rican community are very promising. Already a group of black political figures has formed a “Dumpt Koch” slate on the GOP ticket. The stated purpose is to unseat Koch in 1985. Meanwhile Victor Gobsha, Executive Director of the Federation of State County and Municipal Employees Dis-trict Council 37, largest of the municipal worker unions, is on the line. On a San Francisco speech calling Koch’s pro gram an attempt to “borrow the program of the Republicans to give white skin to the most reactionary government visited upon the U.S. in recent history.

With New York’s minority population constituting approximately 40% of the city’s electorate and with the main municipal employee unions angered over the mayor’s attacks on them, the potential for a 1985 mayoralty election capable of putting blacks in the White House, a way Harold Washington did in Chicago this past spring is thus quite real.

With longer campaigns would have an equally effective effect on New York City’s politics. And it might even rid the city of the mayor who has made the politics of “liberal” white supremacy in its most blatant and odious form. More importantly, it would reinforce the city’s racial and minority communities into the political arena in sizeable numbers for the first time—certainly a crucial step in the polit ical maturation of the working class as a whole.

Jackson . . .

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Black political leverage and allows Blacks to “renegotiate their relationship with the Democratic Party,” is simply proving, in practice, too compelling to resist.

LONG RANGE SIGNIFICANCE

Still, the most accommodatist forces in Black community politics—and the Democratic Party establishment to which they are closely linked—are clearly worried that Jesse Jackson is setting in motion forces too powerful and too explosive for his campaign. The Democratic Party coalition requires Black votes and is prepared to make some minor modifications in its program. It is not surprising that even more that Blacks remain in a subordinate position relating to the capacity of the Democrats to govern. Above all, it requires that the poor and working class strata of Blacks who are for the moment politically passive that they avoid a head-on confrontation with overwhelming Democratic majority, and try something else instead.

Jackson’s candidacy threatens to upset the existing power balance of the Democratic Party. To be sure, Jackson is running as a Democratic and has played down his concern for the “independent presidential bid. But he himself has identified the bottom-line considerations of the party and the Democratic Party coalition requires Black votes and is prepared to make some minor modifications in its program. It is not surprising that even more that Blacks remain in a subordinate position relating to the capacity of the Democrats to govern. Above all, it requires that the poor and working class strata of Blacks who are for the moment politically passive that they avoid a head-on confrontation with overwhelming Democratic majority, and try something else instead.

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