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The Challenge of A Black Presidential Candidacy (1984)

By Robert C. Smith and Joseph P. McCormick, II

An Assessment

(First of two parts)

How effective was Jesse L. Jackson's 1984 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination?

How one evaluates the Jackson campaign depends on the standards or criteria employed in the framework of this analysis. The core of our framework is found in a set of criteria we advanced in an earlier essay, "The Challenge of A Black Presidential Candidacy," which was published in *New Directions* last year. (See Vol. 11, April, 1984, pp. 38-43).

In developing the analytic framework for the first article, we proposed that Jackson's candidacy be evaluated on the basis of its "potential to (1) contribute to the development of an authentic liberal-progressive agenda and constituency and (2) its potential to contribute to Black political empowerment, independence, and leverage in American electoral politics.¹ We wrote:

"Our assessment of the success of the campaign is based not on the number of delegates obtained, nor on whether the Democratic front-runner or Reagan [is] helped or hurt, but instead on the nature of Jackson's definition of the Black predicament and the consequent ideology and policies he argues are necessary to address that predicament. Also, this assessment is based on the extent to which Jackson is willing to challenge the Democratic Party in order to build an independent base of Black power in the party system."²

Thus, two challenges emerged from that essay: the challenge of ideology and the challenge of political independence. On these two points, we observed, "these are the fundamental challenges of *and* to Jackson. The success or failure of his campaign, in the final analysis, will be determined on the basis of how he and the party system meet these challenges."³

This report, therefore, is a quasi-systematic attempt to gauge the impact of

the Jackson campaign on the American party system and presidential selection process, and on the strategy and tactics of Black political empowerment in the United States.

In addition to these core criteria of assessment, we also evaluate the impact of the campaign on Black voter registration and turnout, and on the outcome of the Democratic Party nomination and the general election. In the second part of this report, we offer some tentative generalizations regarding the long-term effects of the campaign on the symbolism and structure of Afro-American community and politics.

This report is a preliminary assessment — first, because of the tentative and incomplete status of relevant data (the quadrennial survey of the national election by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies is an indispensable source for systematic assessment of the campaign); second, because the effects of Jackson's challenge continue to unfold, and indeed will continue to do so in the months and years ahead as the Democratic Party's constituency groups attempt to chart a new direction in light of the challenge of independent Black politics and the continuing defection of key white constituency groups in the 1984 general election.

Black Voter Registration and Turnout

Since the late 1960s, the dominant strategy in Black politics has involved participation in the electoral process.⁴ As a result, the principal concern of Black leadership has been to increase the size and leverage of the Black vote, which is potentially significant because of its size (more than 10% of the national electorate), its concentration in the large cities and states and because it is usually highly cohesive. But the fact that Blacks vote at a lower rate than whites seriously undermines the *actual* significance of the vote. Since 1964, the percentage of Blacks of voting age who ac-

tually voted has declined by 8%, from 59% in 1964 to 51% in 1980, while among white voters it declined from 71% to 61%.⁵ Thus, a major goal of Black American leadership has been to halt and reverse this decline in Black voter participation and narrow the approximately 10% gap in Black and white voting rates.

This goal of increased Black registration and voting was also a primary goal of the Jackson campaign. Jackson argued that Blacks were more likely to register and vote if they had a credible Black candidate to vote for, and those Black voters added to the rolls during the primary campaign could be a powerful force in supporting the Democratic nominee in his effort to unseat President Ronald Reagan, and in contributing to the election of Blacks and progressive whites at the state and local level in 1984 and beyond.

As Jackson himself wrote in the *Washington Post*: "Eighteen million eligible Black voters can be the cornerstone of a new 'coalition of the rejected' (the real silent majority) that can create new political options for 1984."⁶ During his "Southern Crusade" in the summer of 1983, Jackson joined with other Black organizations (Operation Big Vote, the NAACP and the A. Phillip Randolph Institute) in a coordinated campaign to increase Black voter registration. And this effort resulted in a significant increase in Black registration and voting in the primaries, especially in the South. (See Table 1.) Overall, 695,000 Blacks were added to the voter rolls in southern states prior to the Democratic primaries, while among whites there was a net loss of 227,000 voters. Thus, between 1980 and the spring of 1984, Black voter registration in the South increased by 8.5% while white registration declined by nearly 10%.

Similar voter registration figures are not available outside the South. However, observers in major urban centers of the North — New York, Chicago, Los Ange-

les, Philadelphia and Baltimore—indicate there was a similar upsurge in Black registration in the period leading up to the Democratic primaries. In addition, in a survey conducted by the Gallup organization for the Washington-based Joint Center for Political Studies, 7% of a sample of the national Black community's voting age population reported registering since 1982, compared to 4% of voting age whites; 65% of the Black respondents reported that Jackson's campaign had made them more likely to vote.⁷ Therefore, according to available data, a significant increase in Black voter registration has occurred. The data also indicate that Jackson's campaign may, at least in part, be responsible for this development.⁸

The increased Black voter registration apparently translated into increased Black voter turnout in the Democratic primaries. Indeed, it is probable that for the first time in the history of the Democratic Party's nomination process Black Americans voted in the primaries at a greater rate than white Americans. (See Table 2.) The turnout in selected Democratic primaries in 1984 shows that in every state it was greater in "Black areas" than in the state as a whole. Increased Black turnout from 1980 to 1984 ranged from 14% in Georgia to 127% in New York State. This compares to an overall increase in Democratic primary voting of 4% between 1980 and 1984. This massive increase in Black participation in the Democratic primaries must be attributed, in large measure, to the enthusiasm generated by Jackson's campaign.

The increased Black registration and voting during the primaries apparently was not as widespread in the November general election. In the South, during the period after the party conventions, Blacks continued to register at a higher rate than whites but the resulting additions to the voter rolls were not as favorable to Black voter interests, given the respective population bases of whites and Blacks in the general electorate when compared to the Democratic Party electorate. For example, in Georgia in the post convention period, Black registration increased by 15.6%, compared to an increase of 9.7% in white registration. But these percentages translated into an increase of 170,211 new white voters, compared to 74,485 new Black voters. Similarly in Louisiana, a 11.4% Black increase in registration

yielded 14,525 new voters while a more modest 6.6% white increase yielded 40,844 new white voters.⁹ As a result, although the Democratic Party and its constituent groups—including Blacks—were able to increase Black registration, a similar effort by the Republican Party and its constituent groups—especially the white southern evangelical church—were able with less proportionate success to increase the white vote and in effect cancel the impact of the much greater proportionate success of the Black registration effort.

Nevertheless, Black voters did constitute a larger proportion of the newly registered voters in 1984 and a larger proportion of the general electorate as a whole.

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The *New York Times*-CBS News election day exit poll found that 12% of Black voters, compared to 8% of white voters, were casting ballots for the first time.¹⁰ And the *Washington Post*-ABC News exit poll found that Blacks constituted 10% of the electorate in November, an increase of 1% from the 1980 general election.¹¹

Overall, however, in contrast to Black voter participation in the 1984 primaries where there was a significant and influential upsurge, in the general election the picture is mixed. The Joint Center estimates that Black turnout in the general election increased in the South by 5.3% over the 1980 figure, but that there was little or no increase among Blacks outside of the South.¹² Consequently, the expectation of Jesse Jackson and other Black political leaders that increased Black voter registration might alter the electoral college balance in favor of the Democratic ticket did not materialize.

The most basic explanation for the failure of the Black vote to play the anticipated balance of power role was the landslide character of President Reagan's victory. In

addition, Black voters, for a variety of reasons—the Democratic candidates' lack of attention to Black policy concerns during the fall campaign, disappointment and disaffection among some Black voters as a result of Jackson's defeat and the perception among some Black voters as well that Jackson and his constituency were not fairly treated by the Democratic Party and its nominees—did not vote in the November election in the numbers Jackson expected his candidacy to generate.

The Democratic Primaries and Caucuses

Jesse Jackson announced his candidacy on November 3, 1983, much later than all of the other candidates. This late start resulted in a good deal of confusion and lack of coordination in the early stages of the campaign's organization.

Jackson's organization was composed of longtime associates of his Chicago-based Operation PUSH and a range of outside politicians, clergymen and academicians (including some Howard University faculty members; Professor Ronald Walters of the Political Science Department as deputy campaign manager for issues and strategy development; Robert Browne of the African Studies and Research Program and Mary Berry, professor of history and law, as senior policy advisors).

In structure—field operations, scheduling, fundraising, press, issue development, legal counsel, etc.—the Jackson campaign organization was similar to that of other recent presidential campaigns, with most decision-making authority centered in the candidate and a few of his closest aides. There were, however, several distinctive features of the Jackson campaign organization.

First, unlike most presidential campaigns that rely on state and local political organizations and/or established and experienced operatives from previous presidential campaigns, Jackson's core, grassroots organizational base was the Black church and its national network of clergy. The Black church and clergy were a source of both financial and organizational support throughout the campaign. If Jackson had not been able to draw on this national network of preachers, it is doubtful he could have sustained a national campaign for nearly 10 months, especially given the relative ab-

sence of more traditional sources of campaign support.

A second distinctive characteristic of the Jackson campaign was the "constituency desks." The constituency desks were a part of the campaign's effort to build a multi-ethnic and multi-issue coalition. Thus, the campaign included full-time coordinators for key constituent elements of the Rainbow Coalition.

Although Jackson made a systematic organizational effort to reach beyond the Black community to other constituencies, a third distinctive feature of his campaign was its outreach to the range of ideological persuasions within the Black community itself. Jackson was able to bring into the political process, for the first time, members of the Nation of Islam, a group that on ideological and philosophical grounds had long eschewed participation in the established American political process. This, in part, explains Jackson's controversial campaign relationship with Minister Louis Farrakhan. Looking back on the continuous relationship between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King in the 1960s, Jackson told Lerone Bennett of *Ebony* magazine:

"That is why I keep reaching out. You see, before, historically, we did not spiritually unify Blacks of different ideological persuasions . . . This time we've involved the Nationalists, whether its Herb Daughtery or Farrakhan. We are molding our community together. Now those who seek to gain from division in our community have done everything to break that up. The price we pay for expansion into the broader community cannot be the disintegration of our community. That costs too much. We don't support a white candidate based upon the behavior of all of his white supporters."¹³

Jackson's late start and relatively inexperienced staff also affected the financing of the campaign—a campaign without access to large institutional or individual contributions. The Jackson campaign needed extensive prior fund raising activity if it were to qualify for federal matching funds, which require a candidate to receive at least \$5,000 in each of 20 states with a maximum contribution of \$250 per individual by check or money order. Given this disadvantage, Jackson's campaign relied on television debate parties, concerts and "passing the plate" at rallies and during church services. These efforts resulted in substantial cash contributions which, under the federal law, did not qualify for federal matching funds. Thus, the Jackson

campaign, compared to his principal competitors, was handicapped by a shortage of funds and a near constant cash flow problem.

An examination of campaign contributions and disbursements of the principal Democratic candidates shows the disparity between the Jackson campaign and those of his two major opponents. Federal Election Commission data show that as of August 31, 1984, Vice President Walter Mondale's campaign spent \$32,852,724, Senator Gary Hart's \$22,175,047 and Jesse Jackson's \$6,669,026. Indeed, the Election Commission data show that Jackson raised and spent less than all of the eight candidates, except Senators Ernest Hollings and George McGovern and Gov-

"Jackson's support in the Black community cut across all demographic categories."

ernor Rubin Askew. (Two other candidates, John Glenn and Alan Cranston, dropped out early in the spring while Jackson campaigned through the July convention.)

This financial disparity seriously handicapped Jackson's candidacy because, unlike his opponents, Jackson was unable to afford a paid media advertising campaign. Thus, he could not present a coherent image and agenda to the electorate, rather he had to rely on regular media coverage.

In a presidential campaign, the bulk of campaign expenditures are for the preparation and marketing of television advertising. In the Jackson campaign, the largest expenditures were for travel, staff support and fund raising. To the extent, therefore, that effective competition in presidential politics requires an extensive and expensive media campaign, Jackson was not at all competitive. As he quipped during the campaign, "If Hart or Mondale had my budget, they could not compete. And if I had their budgets they could not compete."

In spite of these organizational and fin-

ancial disadvantages, Jackson was remarkably successful in the Democratic primaries and caucuses. In a field of eight nationally known Democratic politicians, Jackson was able to survive the long tortuous process of more than 50 primaries and caucuses and end up as one of the three final contenders for the nomination. He won, for example, the majority of the vote in the District of Columbia, Louisiana, Virginia and South Carolina. In addition, Jackson won the urban vote, carrying such cities as Philadelphia, Newark Atlanta, Little Rock, New Orleans, St. Louis, Charleston, Chicago and New York. (See Table 3.)

The data show that Jackson's fundamental base of support was in the Black community. In the early primaries in Alabama and Georgia, Jackson received 50% and 60% of the Black vote and less than 1% of the white vote, with Mondale receiving the vast majority of the remaining Black vote. However, as the primary season developed, Jackson's percentage of the Black vote steadily increased until he was receiving 75-85% of the total vote, while his percentage of the white vote did not in any state exceed 10%.

Nationwide, it is estimated that Jackson received 85% of the votes cast by Black voters during the primaries. Thus, in spite of the rhetoric of the campaign about a multi-ethnic Rainbow Coalition, the Jackson Campaign was fundamentally a *Black candidacy* rooted in the Black community's historic quest for political empowerment and racial justice.¹⁴

Jackson's support in the Black community cut across all demographic categories. In the early southern primaries, young and rural Blacks were slightly more favorable to Jackson than older and urban Blacks. However, by the end of the primary season, as the campaign picked up momentum and began to take on the characteristics of a movement, Jackson started receiving support from all strata of the community.¹⁵

Although he received less than 10% of the white primary vote, of the 3.4 million votes cast for Jackson, an estimated 22% (737,800) were from whites. The largest white vote for Jackson was cast in California where he received 9% or 285,000 votes. Among Hispanics, Jackson received 33% of the Puerto Rican vote in New York and 17% of the Mexican-American vote in California. Among Asian-Americans, it is

estimated that Jackson received 25% of the vote in New Jersey and 20% in California. Also, Arab-Americans voted for Jackson in overwhelming numbers; he received 5% of the Jewish vote in New York and 8% in California.

Overall, Jackson received 18% of the Democratic primary vote, Mondale 39% and Hart 36%. But in the allocation of the delegates, Jackson received a disproportionate 9% while Mondale received 49% and Hart 36% of the delegates.¹⁶ This was due to the Democratic Party's Hunt Commission rules that were put into effect a year or so prior to the opening primaries. The manifest purpose of the rules was to advantage well organized candidates with traditional party support and disadvantage insurgent, minority (political, not racial) candidates.

Under the rules' "threshold" provision, a candidate, in order to receive any delegates in a particular congressional district, had to receive a minimum share of the vote (generally 20%) in that congressional district and a similar share of the statewide vote in order to receive any delegates. In addition, so called "winner take all," "winner take more" and other "bonus" provisions of the rules operated to further deprive Jackson of the share of the delegates he earned on the basis of his popular vote in the primaries and caucuses.

Jackson and his supporters vigorously challenged these rules throughout the campaign to no avail. As a result, Mondale received the nomination with a majority of convention delegates, although he received only a minority of the votes cast by Democrats who voted in the primaries and caucuses. Under a different set of rules, more nearly approximating one man, one vote, Jackson would have received about twice the number of delegates, Mondale considerably less, and Hart's share probably would have been little changed. As a consequence, the Democratic Convention probably would have been deadlocked and Jesse Jackson's bargaining power and leverage at the convention substantially enhanced.

The Democratic Party, as a result of Jackson's protests, established a so-called "Fairness Commission" to consider re-writing the delegate allocation rules prior to the 1988 election.¹⁸

The Challenge of Ideology

Jesse Jackson's campaign may be credited with some success in increasing Black

registration and voting, and in mobilizing the Black community in support of his candidacy. However, Jackson's candidacy, we believe, failed to meet the challenge of ideology in large part because he elected to challenge the party on electoral rules and procedures rather than on issues and ideology.

In setting forth the challenge of ideology, we argued that it was imperative that a Black presidential candidate develop and articulate a liberal-progressive agenda in order to (1) counteract the conservative drift of the Democratic Party, a conservative drift pushed by right wing southern Democrats and (2) because such an agenda is necessary to address the fundamental social and economic problems confronting the Afro-American community.¹⁹

Although we did not attempt to develop in detail the items that constitute what we called the "unfinished agenda of American liberalism," the following were set forth as a minimalist's program: (1) full employment, (2) education reform, (3) national health insurance, (4) military reform and defense reductions, (5) welfare reform, (6) industrial policy and (7) affirmative action.²⁰ We argued, further, that the "central item on this agenda is the development of a comprehensive set of policies designed to achieve full employment in a relatively short period of time [because] long term and persistent unemployment is the major causal factor in the development of the Black underclass and the 'tangle of pathologies' (female headed households, crime, drug addiction, welfare dependency, alcoholism, etc.) that characterize this part of the Black community."²¹

Although Jackson's official campaign agenda or platform titled "A New Direction" addressed each of the items on our liberal agenda — with special emphasis on employment and industrial policy — in a series of well reasoned and feasible planks,²² in his press conferences, debate appearances and stump speeches he unfortunately elected to emphasize reform of party rules and electoral procedures rather than substantive policy matters.²³

Christopher Edley, in a *Washington Post* essay, wrote: "Reading the recent press reports one might be led to believe that Jackson is running for President in order to reform the Democratic Party, rather than to preach and teach. Yet for me, at least, the chief attraction of his candidacy was the promise of adding color to

the policy debate. A brawl over rules is dangerously diverting."²⁴

Jackson's focus on the Democratic Party rules regarding delegate allocation is to some extent understandable since he believed, correctly, that the Hunt Commission rules unfairly deprived his constituency of fair and equitable representation at the party convention and thereby deprived him of bargaining power and leverage in convention decision-making with respect to the party nominees and platform.²⁵

Jackson's focus on abolition of the second primary, an issue that he at one point labeled a "litmus test" for his support of the party and its nominee, is less understandable. The second primary — the procedure employed in the southern states requiring a second or a run-off election if no candidate receives a majority in a multi-candidate race — apparently became a matter of concern to Jackson as a result of his "Southern Crusade" the year before he announced his candidacy. During this "crusade" to register and empower southern Blacks, Jackson was told by a number of Black leaders (especially in Mississippi) that the second primary was a major obstacle to effective Black political empowerment in the region. As a result, Jackson decided to make abolition of the second primary (and associated discriminatory procedures employed in the South, such as gerrymandering, at-large elections, dual registration and single shot voting) the major issue focus of the campaign.

There is considerable debate among historians, political scientists, journalists, legal scholars and politicians regarding the origins and consequences of the second primary and the probable effects of its abolition on southern politics and Black political empowerment.²⁶ But the merits of the issue notwithstanding, we believe that it was a *fundamental strategic error* for Jackson to elevate this problem to the status of the "litmus test" issue of the campaign because of its predictable effect of shifting media attention away from the employment crisis in the Black community, a crisis which should have been the litmus test issue of the campaign.

The result was that the ideological challenge of the campaign was blurred, leaving mass opinion with the impression that the purpose of Jackson's candidacy was to abolish the second primary, reform the Democratic Party or perhaps secure a homeland for

Southern Voter Registration by Race, 1980-84

State	White registration			Black registration		
	1980	1984	Change	1980	1984	Change
Alabama	1,700,000	1,664,000	- 36,000	350,000	482,000	+132,000
Arkansas	1,056,000	964,000	- 92,000	130,000	155,000	+ 25,000
Florida	4,331,000	4,337,000	+ 6,000	489,000	517,000	+ 28,000
Georgia	1,800,000	1,787,000	- 13,000	450,000	512,000	+ 62,000
Louisiana	1,550,000	1,609,000	+ 8,000	465,000	535,000	+ 70,000
N. Carolina	2,314,000	2,369,000	+ 55,000	440,000	565,000	+125,000
S. Carolina	916,000	848,000	- 68,000	320,000	331,000	+ 11,000
Tennessee	2,200,000	2,082,000	-118,000	300,000	348,000	+ 48,000
Texas	6,020,000	6,042,000	+ 22,000	620,000	720,000	+100,000
Virginia	1,942,000	1,908,000	- 34,000	360,000	378,000	+ 18,000
TOTAL	24,981,000	24,754,000	-227,000	4,254,000	4,949,000	+695,000

SOURCE: American Political Report and the Voter Education Project as reported in *News* 12 (June 1984): 9. The figures are for the period through April, 1984.

Changes in Turnout in Democratic Primaries in Selected States, 1980-84

State	Black areas*	State total
Alabama	+ 87%	+71%
Florida	+ 38	+ 7
Georgia	+ 14	-34
Illinois	+ 19	+37
New York	+127	+37
Pennsylvania	+ 32	- 2
Tennessee	+ 58	+ 7
Indiana	+ 29	+17
Maryland	+ 33	+ 1
North Carolina	+ 53	+18
Ohio	+ 36	+21
New Jersey	+ 82	+19

*Black Areas are precincts in which Blacks comprise 80% or more of the population.

SOURCE: Thomas Cavanagh and Loren Foster, *Jesse Jackson's Campaign: The Primaries and Caucuses* (Washington: Joint Center for Political Studies, 1984): 17.

Voting by Race in Selected 1984 Democratic Primaries

State*	BLACKS				WHITES			
	Mondale	Jackson	Glenn	Hart	Mondale	Jackson	Glenn	Hart
Alabama	47%	50%	1%	1%	29%	1%	32%	37%
Georgia	30	61	1	5	32	1	25	38
Illinois	17	79	-	4	-	4	47	45
New York	8	87	-	3	57	6	-	36
Tennessee	18	77	-	2	51	2	-	43
Indiana	20	71	-	9	44	3	-	51
Maryland	13	83	-	1	53	5	-	35
North Carolina	13	84	-	1	46	3	-	41
Ohio	15	81	-	3	44	5	-	50
California	16	78	-	5	40	9	-	48
New Jersey	11	86	-	2	56	4	-	38

*The states are listed in the order that their primaries occurred.

SOURCE: *New York Times*—CBS News Exit Polls.

the Palestinians in Palestine. This distortion of the ideological purposes of the campaign was inevitable, given the complexity of the second primary issue, the tendency of the media to focus on trivia and the pseudo-dramatic (as the coverage of the "Hymie" and Farrakhan controversies illustrate) and Jackson's inability, for financial reasons, to present his own campaign agenda through a paid advertising campaign.

Jackson's failure to pursue issue clarity is also demonstrated by examination of the four minority planks presented for debate at the Democratic Convention. Two of the planks — affirmative action and reduction in military expenditures — correspond to our liberal agenda. The other issues presented — the second primary and adoption by the United States of a policy of "no first use" of nuclear weapons — did not. (The plank on nuclear weapons was an effort by Jackson to appeal to the peace constituency.) Again, the effect of the debate on the four planks during the convention was to leave the campaign without a sharp ideological edge.²⁷ In our view, Jackson would have better served his constituency and the strategic purposes of the campaign had he presented to the convention for debate a single issue — a well-crafted program for full employment.

A related aspect of the challenge of ideology was to prevent the Democratic Party, its nominees and platform, from shifting to the right — a shift in strategy for the party that was articulated in a series of speeches and articles by, among others, Bert Lance and Hamilton Jordan, protégés of former President Jimmy Carter. The leading right-of-center candidate in early 1984 was Senator John Glenn, who in the early polls led or was in a respectable second place to Vice President Mondale. (The other right-of-center candidates in the Democratic primaries were former Florida Governor Rubin Askew and South Carolina Senator Ernest Hollings.)

This aspect of the challenge of ideology was met, we believe, since the more conservative candidates for the nomination were eliminated early in the primary process. The Jackson campaign, however, had relatively little effect on this outcome. This is because Blacks, the largest and indeed the core liberal constituency in the Democratic Party and Jackson's candidacy, effectively deprived the more liberal candidates (Mondale, McGovern, Hart and Cranston)

of their support. But Vice President Mondale, a traditional liberal, was able to eliminate his more conservative opponents in spite of Jackson's dominance of the liberal Black vote. Mondale's nomination can probably be accounted for in terms of a number of factors specific to the 1984 nomination process.

First, Mondale had the support of virtually the entire Democratic Party establishment — labor, Jews, liberals and the majority of state and county party leaders. Second, Mondale had a better campaign organization than his rivals. Third, Mondale's campaign was better financed. Fourth, the Hunt Commission rules favored a well organized, establishment type candidate such as Mondale. Fifth, Jackson's candidacy notwithstanding, Mondale received significant support from Blacks, among them a number of mayors, members of Congress and Atlanta's influential King family. Finally, regarding the early elimination of Mondale's more conservative opponents, the outcome of the 1984 Democratic primaries indicate that moderately conservative candidates can command only a fraction of the party's presidential electorate.

It has been clear at least since 1972 that the Democratic Party has shifted to the liberal center, in part as a result of the realignment of the two parties' core constituencies since the 1964 election. Senator Gary Hart's second place finish in the 1984 Democratic primaries further supports this conclusion. Although on the basis of some of his demographic support (young and upwardly mobile white urban professionals or what the press boorishly labeled "Yuppies") and ill-informed press coverage, Hart was frequently viewed as a conservative, especially in the Black community. However, a report by two political science professors at Howard found "significant common ground and mutuality of interests" on domestic issues between Hart's "neoliberal" agenda and Jackson's "Black" agenda.²⁸

The outcome of the Democratic nomination was a triumph for liberalism in the sense that the more conservative candidates were eliminated early in the process and the three top vote getters were all representatives of the party's liberal wing — Mondale the traditional liberal, Hart the neoliberal and Jackson the insurgent left-liberal.

Although Mondale's nomination assured

that the party would not move in a sharp right wing direction, its San Francisco platform is arguably the most conservative in a generation.²⁹ The bulk of the platform consists of a series of long partisan attacks on the domestic and foreign policy record of the Reagan Administration, and on the specifics of the liberal agenda—a series of vague generalities.³⁰

On the question of employment, the party refused to reaffirm its commitment to a full employment economy or propose specific policies to significantly reduce the unemployment rate. There was no mention of national health insurance or welfare reform, traditional items in the party's platforms. And on defense spending, rather than repudiating the unprecedented Rea-

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gan build-up, the platform proposed only a modest slowdown in the rate of growth in military outlays.

Overall, while the Democratic platform was not a conservative document, neither was it a traditional liberal one. Rather, it was a centrist document that sought to accommodate the apparent conservative mood of the middle class white electorate.³¹ And, consistent with the platform, Mondale's fall campaign was characterized by a cautious moderation, emphasizing fiscal austerity, tax increases and a balanced budget. Put simply, the left-liberal challenge of a Black presidential candidacy was met by a cautious but clear movement from the left of center. □

Robert C. Smith and Joseph P. McCormick, II are faculty members of the Department of Political Science at Howard University. The second part of their report will appear in our July issue.

Notes

¹Robert C. Smith and Joseph P. McCormick, II, "The Challenge of A Black Presidential Candidacy," *New Directions* 11 (April 1984): 40.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ronald Walters, "The Challenge of Black Leadership: An Analysis of the Problem of Strategy Shift," *Urban League Review* 5 (Summer 1980): 77-88.

⁵John Reid, "The Voting Behavior of Blacks," *Intercom* 9 (July-August 1982): 8-11.

⁶Jesse L. Jackson, "Hey, You Democrats: We'll All Benefit If A Black Runs for President," *Washington Post*, April 10, 1983, p. C1.

⁷Thomas Cavanagh, *Inside Black America* (Washington: Joint Center for Political Studies, forthcoming).

⁸The first major upsurge in Black registration and voting occurred prior to Jackson's 1983 "Southern Crusade" and the 1984 presidential campaign. In the 1982 election, exit poll data indicate that for the first time Black Americans appear to have voted in proportion to their share of the population and at a rate equivalent to whites. See Harry Sussman, "Both Parties Lost Election," *Washington Post*, December 28, 1982, p. A22. This upsurge in Black registration and voting in the 1982 elections is generally attributed to Ronald Reagan. That is, the extremely negative reaction of Blacks to the President's policies is believed to have mobilized Black voter participation in the 1982 elections and it is reasonable to assume that, subtract Jackson's campaign, Reagan's candidacy in 1984 might have had a similar mobilizing effect. President Reagan and his policies are more unpopular among Blacks than those of any other post-war administration. From the first months of his administration, more than 80% of Blacks evaluated the President's job performance unsatisfactorily and in the Gallup Poll for the Joint Center 72% of Blacks said they believed President Reagan was "prejudiced" (see Cavanagh, *Inside Black America*). For data and analysis on the disproportionately adverse impact of Reagan policies on Blacks see, *Falling Behind: A Report on How Blacks Have Fared Under Reagan Policies* (Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1984).

⁹Thomas B. Edsall, "Republican Party Is Holding Its Own In Registration of Voters," *Washington Post*, September 16, 1984, p. A1.

¹⁰David Rosenbaum, "The 1984 Elections: Surveys Provide Portrait of Electorate," *New York Times*, November 7, 1984, p. A23.

¹¹Juan Williams and Paul Taylor, "Blacks Reap Disappointment in Election," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1984, p. A46.

¹²Thomas Cavanagh, "Election Round-Up," *Focus* 12 (November-December 1984): 6. In its post election survey of 50,000 people conducted two weeks after the election, the Census Bureau reports 60% of the respondents said they voted in 1984, up 1% from the figure reported in the 1980 survey. Among Blacks, 55.8% said they voted in 1984, compared to 50.5% in the 1980 survey. See "Women, Blacks Raised Vote Turnout," *Washington Times*, January 28, 1985, p.3A.

¹³*Ebony* magazine, "Jesse Jackson Speaks: An Interview," August, 1984, pp. 166-74.

¹⁴See Robert C. Smith, "The Challenge of A Black Presidential Candidacy: The Politics of Black Power Twenty Years Later," (manuscript, Department of Political Science, Howard University, 1984). On the meaning structurally of the Black Power movement, see Smith's "Black Power and the Transformation From Protest to Politics," *Political Science Quarterly* 96 (Fall 1981): 431-43.

¹⁵Estimates of Jackson's primary vote are drawn from a memorandum prepared for the Jackson campaign organization by Professors Lorenzo Morris and Linda Williams of Howard's political science faculty and by Acie Byrd, a graduate student in the department. Portions of the memorandum were published in the campaign's official press kit distributed at the San Francisco convention. See *A New Direction: Jackson Campaign Press Kit* (Washing-

ton: The Rainbow Coalition, 1984): 5-10.

¹⁶A total of 697 Black delegates were present at the San Francisco convention, representing 18% of the total (up from 14% in 1980). In addition to the 305 delegates pledged to Jackson, 208 were committed to Mondale, 70 to Hart, 29 to Chicago Mayor Harold Washington, 1 to McGovern and 84 were uncommitted.

¹⁷Ronald Walters, "Unfair Reflection of Minority Participation in the Presidential Nomination Process of the Democratic Party." Paper prepared for the Jackson campaign organization, 1984.

¹⁸The Jackson campaign recommended that the Fairness Commission consider the following rule changes: (1) abolishing the caucus system and requiring primaries in all states and territories, (2) eliminating the category of unpledged party and elected officials as delegates, (3) establishing a system of complete proportionality in translating votes into delegates and (4) requiring "assured percentages" of delegates for women, minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

¹⁹Smith and McCormick, "The Challenge of A Black Presidential Candidacy," p. 40.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid, p. 41.

²²"New Directions" Platform of the Jesse Jackson Campaign for President, (Washington: The Rainbow Coalition, 1984).

²³For evidence of Jackson's near constant focus on the rules as the central campaign issue see Jesse Jackson "Moving to Common Ground," *Washington Post*, March 25, 1984, p. A22 and Jackson "Runoffs and Primaries" *Washington Post*, April 16, 1984, p. A13. See also Martin Schram, "Jackson to Get Hearing on DNC Rules," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1983, p. A16 and Art Harris, "Jackson Urges Mondale to Use Clout to Settle Democratic Rules Dispute," *Washington Post*, January 12, 1984, p. A13.

²⁴Christopher Edley, Jr., "Jesse Jackson vs. the Rules," *Washington Post*, December 28, 1984, p. A19.

²⁵In the earlier paper, we wrote "... Jackson's challenge of the Democratic Party delegate selection rules is a cause of concern. . . . Since even a change of rules is not likely to alter the outcome of the nomination or substantially enhance the number of Jackson delegates at the convention, it probably is not worth a public challenge that would draw attention away from discussion of the Black predicament and the liberal, progressive agenda," see Smith and McCormick, "The Challenge of a Black Presidential Candidacy," p. 43. On these points we were wrong, since a change of rules would have increased substantially the number of Jackson delegates and probably altered the outcome of the convention.

²⁶On the second primary debate, see the Joint Center For Political Studies, "The Run-off Primary, Blacks and the Democratic Party," *Focus* 12 (June 1984): 5-7, J. Morgan Kousser, "The Historical Origins of the Run-off Primary" *Focus* 12 (June 1984): 7-10, Alexander P. Lamis, "The Runoff Primary Controversy: Implications for Southern Politics," *PS* 16 (Fall 1984): 782-87, Stuart Rothenberg, "Runoffs, Race and Realignment," *Election Politics* 1 (Summer 1984): 29-32, Theodore White, "Jackson: Democratic Revolutionary," *New York Times*, April 5, 1984, p. A23, Steven Roberts, "Concern in Congress Over Jackson Runoff Stand," *New York Times*, April 16, 1984, p. B8 and Robert C. Smith and Joseph P. McCormick, II, "The Second Primary," Memorandum prepared for the Jackson Campaign Organization, 1984. For a general theoretical, historical and legal discussion of the varied techniques used in the South to deny or dilute the voting rights of Blacks, see Chandler Davidson (ed.) *Minority Vote Dilution* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1984).

²⁷The convention adopted compromise language on affirmative action, supporting goals and timetables to eradicate discrimination but opposing quotas. The other three planks were defeated on the convention floor by margins of more than two to one.

²⁸Joseph P. McCormick, II and Walter T. Daniels, "Blacks, Neoliberalism and the Democratic Party: An Opportunity Lost or An Opportunity Found," (manuscript, Department of Political Science, Howard University, 1984). McCormick and Daniels also argue that the Hart campaign made a strategic error in conceding the Black vote to Jackson and Mondale rather than aggressively challenging them.

²⁹In its lead report on the Democratic Platform deliberations, the *New York Times* dispatch began by reporting, "The Democratic platform committee today neared completion of a platform that includes far fewer commitments to sweeping social programs and is considerably more conservative than those adopted by the party in recent years." See Warren Weaver, "Democratic Panel Nears Completion of Fall Platform," *New York Times*, June 24, 1984, p. A1. David Broder, in his post convention analysis of both major party platforms, noted the "... shift to the center and away from the New Deal-Great Society approach in the Democratic platform" but also an "... accelerated right wing movement [in the Republican Platform] that is now almost unchecked by any significant intraparty moderate or progressive opposition." See "Parties Resharpen Decades-old Ideological Clash," *Washington Post*, August 18, 1984, p. A1.

³⁰*Platform of the Democratic National Party, 1984*, (Washington: Democratic National Committee, 1984).

³¹In our challenge of ideology, we limited our attention to the domestic liberal agenda except for the issue of South Africa, an issue we described as of "transcendental" importance to the Black community. We urged Jackson to use every campaign forum to raise the issue and to seek pledges from his rivals for specific platform commitments to impose sanctions on the South African government. Jackson frequently raised the issue in the campaign and as a result, in part, the platform adopted at San Francisco repudiated the Reagan policy of "constructive engagement" and called for a series of specific sanctions to "hasten the establishment of a democratic, unitary political system within South Africa. . . ."