platform, as well as the composition of Dukakis's campaign inasmuch as a black presence will be apparent among Dukakis's key advisers. Exacting a firm promise for, say, two black cabinet or subcabinet posts, and for posts other than black-related ones like HUD, can also be expected.

In return, Jackson will owe Dukakis and the Democrats a major quid pro quo—namely, to induce and help mobilize a major black voter registration and election turnout. If this is realized, there will be a Dukakis victory in November and a solid framework for reinforcing blacks' parity-status in the Democratic party alongside the parity-status of White ethnic groups. □

Michael Harrington

A CASE FOR JACKSON

Jesse Jackson's 1988 campaign marks a historic breakthrough in American politics. It is the first time that a "social democratic" platform has been presented in the mainstream of American politics and attracted significant mass support. The journalistic cliché was, and is, that Jackson's program is "extremist," vague, outrageously expensive. In fact, as a correspondent for the London *Financial Times* reported, only in Ronald Reagan's America could Jackson's eminently moderate and sensible ideas be seen as far out. Those ideas, on full employment, health, North-South and the like, are familiar to readers of *Dissent,* members of Democratic Socialists of America, and the broad democratic left. They are, more or less, what we have been talking about during the past decade and in some cases the people who articulated them for Jackson came from our world.

Second, Jackson has managed to put together an extraordinary interracial coalition. In 1984 I was disturbed that the "rainbow" campaign was primarily black with little appeal to other minorities or whites. When Jackson announced in that year that "our time has come," he was speaking in the accents of racial pride, which was understandable but not designed to broaden the coalition. The contrast with 1988 (and the several years of informal campaigning that preceded the actual declaration of candidacy) is stark.

Obviously, Jackson has retained his black base, for instance getting more than 90 percent of its vote in the New York primary. But then those sages who announce that Jackson would be nowhere were he not black might as well have said that John F. Kennedy would have been a nonentity had he not been an Irish-Catholic politician from Massachusetts. All serious candidates start with a parochial base, be it racial or ethnic or whatever. The question is, what do they do with it, how do they expand it? And there Jackson has succeeded to a surprising degree.

His appeal to working people—he is the most pro-union candidate in recent memory—did not always translate into votes but won him very real respect even from many who cast their ballot for another candidate. In Iowa, it is clear that he had an appeal to farm families in small communities that saw few blacks. And, more predictably, he succeeded very well with the new-class vote in the college towns and urban centers.

Third, Jackson has broken some racial barriers. Let there be no mistake about it, there was a "backlash," particularly in some of the later primaries. But what is remarkable is that in every state Jackson significantly increased—and sometimes doubled—his percentage of the white vote in 1984. When the campaign began, even though I supported Jackson I felt that the racism of the society would limit him much more than it did in fact. And one of the reasons why he succeeded in this area is that his social democratic class appeal reached across color lines, in some cases moving even former George Wallace voters.

I have thought for some time now that Jackson may in many ways be a precursor on the model of Al Smith in 1928. Not so much in the sense that Smith prepared the way for Jack Kennedy by being the first to challenge the Catholic barrier, but rather in the sense that Smith was the first to rally the Roosevelt coalition and particularly the urban working class. Jesse Jackson's 1988 campaign, I suggest, may well be the first political movement of the 1990s as well

Jesse Jackson gains support from New York's Hispanic leaders. (Donna Binder/IMPACT VISUALS)

as a significant step toward the possibility of a black president.

But why, if all these positive things can be said about Jackson, are there a significant number of excellent people who agree with his program but refuse to support him?

To begin with, Jackson has had a somewhat mercurial career. In 1980, for instance, he emphasized black capitalism, not a social democratic approach to full employment, and was critical of the Kennedy jobs plank at the Democratic Convention. And there is the problem that he has never held elective office, legislative or executive, which is a serious consideration when one thinks about the next president of the United States.

Second, there was the impact of the "Hymietown" remark in 1984. I do not read that incident as proof of some underlying and virulent anti-Semitism. I think—and I am proceeding on intuition not insider's knowledge—that Jackson spoke in the accents of a racism that was part of his early milieu and that he should have long since transcended. I also think that he sincerely, if belatedly, tried to make amends and, for reasons of pragmatism in a society in which race is still a potentially explosive issue, as well as out of charity, he should be taken at his word.

The relationship with Louis Farrakhan raises much more serious questions than the "Hymietown" incident. Farrakhan is, after all, not an unthinking purveyor of "populist" (in this case, black populist) racial stereotypes. He is a principled, vigorous anti-Semite and quite probably deserves to be labeled a fascist. When I was coming to the conclusion that Jackson should be supported, his refusal to repudiate Farrakhan—even though he did indeed reject his specific remarks—made me hesitate more than anything else. Even now, it continues to bother me.

Why has Jackson been so reluctant to condemn Farrakhan straightforwardly? He says that it is a matter of Christian principle, of hating the sin but not the sinner. I take that seriously. Martin Luther King, Jr., after all, used to insist that the movement not hate its tormenters and he was severely attacked for that attitude by the Panthers and the militants from SNCC in the year or so before his assassination.

At the same time, there are obviously political—and very secular—considerations in Jackson's stance toward Farrakhan. The cynical version of this thesis is that he is motivated by the desire to retain every last bit of political support in the black community and refuses to alienate even a Farrakhan for opportunistic reasons. A more complex theory, which I find more cogent, is that, even though he is appalled by Farrakhan, he sees a public denunciation of him, particularly a public denunciation in response to white demands, as a way of breaking the solidarity of an oppressed group. Before the recent ferment in American Jewry, I sometimes encountered a similar view on the part of people who shared my criticism of, say, Begin's policies but did not want to voice their opposition outside of the family for fear of being taken as opponents of Israel. I didn't like that attitude any more than I do Jackson's, but it cannot be dismissed as opportunism.

But even though I was very much put off by the refusal to denounce Farrakhan, I had to decide whether that was more important than what was to be gained by a multiracial, social democratic candidacy. I made the political judgment that it was not, even as I recognized that those who disagreed with me could do so honestly and with great political seriousness.

Finally, there is the issue of Israel itself. It has been a central question for me ever since, in 1948, I became an ideological labor Zionist. At the same time, I have long believed that the Palestinians, like the Jews, have the right to national self-determination and that the only solution to the conflict is a negotiated settlement that would recognize two states. When I decided to support Jackson, I knew that he had come to this point of view but I assumed that he had originally been a partisan of the PLO, a belief based in large part on the famous photograph of him embracing Yasir Arafat. I was wrong on this last count. It turns out that Jackson had a solid point of view even when he met with Arafat.

The *Village Voice* recently reprinted some Associated Press accounts of that meeting that corroborate Jackson's own version of the event. He met with Arafat at the urging of Anwar Sadat and he told the PLO leader that he should recognize the right of Israel to exist and negotiate a peace with it on the model of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. Indeed, the AP quoted a PLO leader who attacked Jackson for being, in effect, an Israeli agent.

But I do not want to end this comment on a defensive note. Jesse Jackson, for all the questions that can legitimately be raised about him, has mobilized the victims of racism in an interracial coalition based on principled opposition to injustice and class rule and in favor of a social democratic alternative. That is an enormous, historic accomplishment, which should reverberate well beyond 1988. The Jackson campaign is, in short, the first social-political movement of the nineties and I am proud to have been a part of it. □

Irving Howe

A MIXED RESPONSE

The best thing Jesse Jackson did during the Democratic primary was to name the problems. He was the one Democratic candidate who stressed that there are serious social wrongs in the United States requiring more than superficial treatment. He offered a program roughly akin to that of the liberal-left. He brought the black community to a high point of enthusiasm. He acknowledged the needs of an important segment of the white working class. He raised hopes for survival among frayed remnants of the New Left. He enlisted as supporters a significant minority of the unions. He brought vividness to an otherwise bland campaign. For all of which he deserves credit.

There now exists a strong constituency behind Jackson and this changes the relationship of political forces within the Democratic party—as, to a lesser extent, within the country.

Behind Jackson's success there was the glaring failure of the traditional liberal and labor constituencies to play important roles in the Democratic primaries. The major liberal politicians stayed (or copped) out. The Lane Kirkland leadership of the AFL-CIO was barely heard from and not many