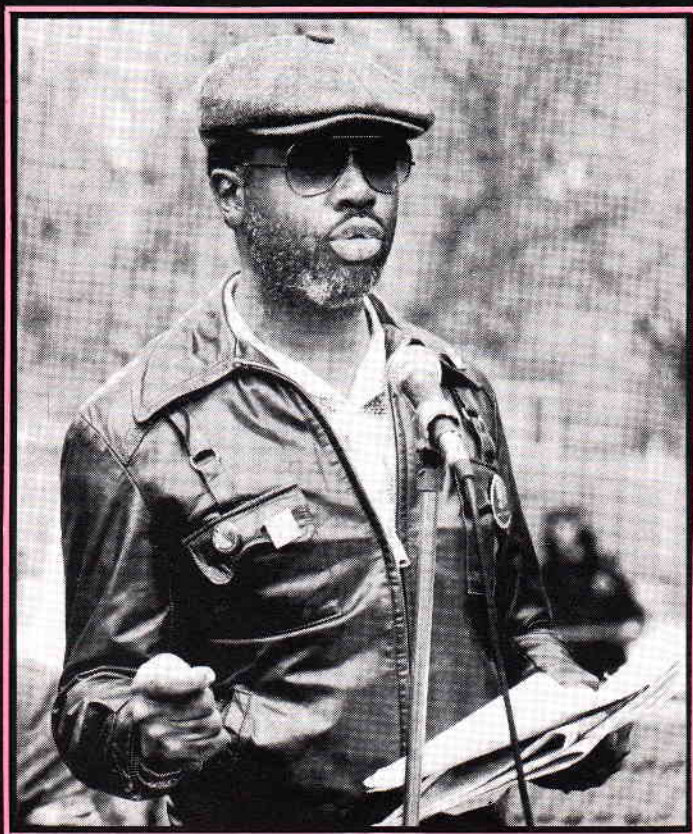


*Revolution
Not Elections
Is the Way Out of
This Madness*

*Two Articles
by Carl Dix*



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***RCP Publications
Chicago***

Table of Contents

Biography of Carl Dix 1

**Carl Dix, the Anticandidate, Says It's Wake Up Time in America:
Revolution Not Elections Is the Way Out of This Madness 3**

**Dial 1-800 JESSE, or Jesse Jackson and the Politics of Deceit,
Control, and Suppression 7**

Appendix: Can't Get No Election Satisfaction 21

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Biography of Carl Dix

Carl Dix is a founding member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA and has a long history in revolutionary struggles. One of the Fort Lewis 6 — U.S. soldiers who refused orders to Vietnam in 1970 — he was sentenced to two years in Leavenworth Military Prison. In the early 1970s he was an active member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and the Black Workers Congress (an organization of revolutionary Black workers) and later the African Liberation Support Committee. As a representative of the Revolutionary Communist Party, he served as panel moderator for the 1981 Mass Proletarian War Crimes Tribunal against U.S. Imperialism. In 1983 he was a panelist exposing Soviet social-imperialism at the international conference “The Nature and Role of the Soviet Union.” In 1984 Carl Dix participated in the London press conference which announced the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. Later that year he ran as the “Anticandidate” in the 1984 presidential election. In 1985 Dix helped originate the Draw the Line statement condemning the massacre of the MOVE organization in Philadelphia, and he has spoken extensively about that state-sponsored act of murder and repression. More recently Carl Dix has taken part, both in print and public debate, in the controversy touched off by the publication of Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple*, strongly and uncompromisingly affirming the decisiveness of the struggle against women’s oppression. Carl Dix has also been a featured speaker at the Biko Lives Festival held in New York in the last three years.

Carl Dix, the Anticandidate, Says It's Wake Up Time in America: Revolution Not Elections Is the Way Out of This Madness

Election time is on again. Time, they say, to make the system work for you. Sure. I CHALLENGE ANYONE TO SHOW HOW THE THREAT OF WORLD WAR, THE OPPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE, AND EVERYTHING ELSE FOUL ABOUT THIS SYSTEM CAN BE SOLVED BY WORKING WITHIN IT. And let me put it straight to those who should know better. How many more wars are you willing to fight for these vultures? How many more Democratic administrations are you going to elect for them? How many more chances are you going to give this system to prove what it has been proving to you for the last 350 years — that it is built on oppression, thrives on oppression, and counts on the victims of oppression to swallow its lies and promises?

Look, I know there are people out there, millions of oppressed people, who have fought *against* this system, who continue to fight it, and who realize this system can eat you alive. And I know that there is a yearning out there for a different kind of system in which people don't have to live this way. So why let them put you on the elections treadmill? Why go for the puny politics and the sorry, slave vision of those who tell you to "keep hope alive" for America when your life experience tells you the complete opposite? Why let them reduce you to this when you have a chance to get clear on what needs to be done and to start acting on it? Especially now, when this system, on account of its own troubles and crises, may give us the

only chance we really need, the chance to do it in and to bring something new into being.

Fact is they've been playing people like a pinball machine with these elections. First they bombard you with this civics bullshit about how voting is a precious right, that great equalizer that allows even the poorest or those most without hope to influence things. So now you're thinking about your duty — you know, voting for the oppressor of your choice. Then they get your heart pumping with a Jesse Jackson. The message is that things are really different this time. Someone who knows your problems is out there on front street, and he may even have a chance. But it's a funny thing. Jackson's talking about a "war on drugs" that makes even Reagan look tame. Fact is, in the name of "getting tough" to combat dope, Jackson is really calling for more terror and more clampdown in the Black and oppressed communities. So now they are rallying you to be part of your own suppression. But you don't want to read between the lines. They tell you you're real inspired and full of hope. Then some air is let out of the Jackson balloon. It's "common ground" time. You'll be voting for Dukakis. Oh, he's not your first choice, but "we gotta get the Republicans out," and there's always '92 or '96. Now they've got you where they want you. Welcome to the world of illusion and passivity.

1988. It's wake up time in America. This is the same U.S. of A. that gave you genocide against the Native Americans, slavery, the theft of Mexican lands, two world wars, Vietnam . . . the same system that is now nuked to the gills, ready to wipe out every trace of life on this planet to preserve its profits. This is what America stands for. It's what they want you to be a

Why go for the puny politics and the sorry, slave vision of those who tell you to "keep hope alive" for America when your life experience tells you the complete opposite?

chump for. And they never finish with the mind games. They turn around and tell you that you have no right to complain unless you participate . . . participate in their dead-end, rubber-stamp political process. I say the only process to participate in is the process of preparing for and making revolution.

Some say that's just rhetoric. Tell that to the brothers and sisters of

South Africa, Palestine, Haiti, and Peru. Some say it's not possible in the U.S., so go for something more realistic. I say that's the kind of realism that keeps slaves slaves. Anyway, the 1960s were a technicolor preview of how shit can break loose right here in the belly of the beast. And the situation shaping up in the world and the country may soon create the conditions for even more wild mass upheaval in this country, where it really becomes possible to strike at the jugular of this system. The ruling class knows it can happen — that's why they're securing their borders, tightening their grip on the oppressed communities, terrorizing immigrants, suppressing women, putting new repressive legal machinery in place, and, yes, building up Jesse Jackson.

You got people talking about "common ground." I'm talking about preparing the ground for the future battleground, for an all-the-way, no-holds-barred revolution.

So maybe now you're getting a picture of what my ANTICANDIDACY is all about. I'm saying that elections are a con game. I'm saying that Jesse Jackson is part of the problem, not part of the solution. I'm saying we better get hip to the new crimes on the agenda of U.S. imperialism. I'm saying that we better get rid of some dangerous illusions. Most of all, I'm saying what needs doing: getting ready for revolution. You got people talking about "common ground." I'm talking about preparing the ground for the future battleground, for an all-the-way, no-holds-barred revolution. That's what this ANTICANDIDACY is committed to. I call upon people who see the elections for what they are to join in exposing this deadly lunacy, and to join with me in using this anticampaign to bring us that much closer to the day when we can bring this system down.

Carl Dix

***Support the Anticandidate:
It's Wake Up Time in America!***

***The right to vote has been won . . .
Now we need the political awareness and
sophistication NOT TO USE IT.***

***We don't want our fair share . . .
We want to tear the whole system down!***

***Elections are the wrong arena . . .
It's going to come down to
REVOLUTIONARY WAR.***

***Join, build, support our vanguard . . .
the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.***

Support the anticandidate.

Write to Carl Dix at P.O. Box 400381, Brooklyn, New York 11240-0381.
Or call (212) 713-5084.

***Dial 1-800 JESSE,
or Jesse Jackson and
the Politics of Deceit,
Control, and
Suppression***



“I want to serve America.” With these words, Jesse Jackson declared his second campaign for the Democratic Party nomination for president. Since that announcement back in September, the Jackson candidacy has kicked up a lot of dust. Before the primaries even began, Jackson led his rivals in public opinion polls. And throughout the primaries, Jackson’s campaign was the most talked about development: a Black person was a serious contender for the presidential nomination and might be offered the vice-presidential spot on the Democratic ticket. The media cheered that he was the best speaker around. And Jackson, it was said, had opened the system up to those left out.

But the question we have to ask ourselves is what Jesse Jackson really

represents. For many, he is the candidate representing the advancement of Black people. He is also viewed as the voice of the downtrodden and a champion of progressive and even radical causes. For others, the “radical maverick” of 1984 has trimmed his sails to become a mainstream player in Democratic Party politics. None of this could be further from the truth.

Jesse Jackson likes to remind audiences: “The hands that picked cotton now pick the president.” But in reality powerful sections of the American ruling class have picked him and allowed the Jesse Jackson campaign to flourish. The political authorities have supported and treated his candidacy in a very different way than in 1984. They need a political figure who can be put forward to Black people as their leader on a national level and showcased to the whole society as someone with a popular mandate to speak for and act on behalf of — that is, put the clamps on — Black people and more generally the oppressed of all nationalities.

Let's Be For Real — What the Jackson Candidacy Is All About

The U.S. rulers face an increasingly complex and desperate situation. They are forced to prepare and position for a global showdown with their Soviet rivals. At the same time, they face mass upheaval and revolutionary outbreaks in different parts of the world. All this decreases the flexibility they have in dealing with the developing situation, including their ability to contain and stifle contradictions at home.

What if they had been unable to pull the stock market out of its tailspin last year? What if the situation in the Persian Gulf spirals out of control? What if they had been forced to invade Nicaragua and accompany that with roundups of Central Americans and others in the U.S.? What would be the repercussions of any of these developments in the ghetto? (Or of any similar developments in the future?)

Let's be for real. Given the situation the rulers face, is Jesse Jackson ours or theirs? I mean should we view him as a product of mass upsurge or as an instrument of control and counterinsurgency? Does his success in the primaries represent the political system opening up to include those previously locked out or are the rulers positioning and preparing for a lockdown? Jesse is most definitely theirs! And it is a problem that many people — who at least oppose the way this system forces people to live — want to claim him.

The Jackson candidacy represents an insurance policy taken out by the rulers, damage control in the face of potential explosions. What they're doing through this election is certainly not deciding whether the future direction of the country will be Reaganite or liberal. They're looking at and getting ready for future upheavals of all kinds. And how to contain the volatility of the Black masses, and all the oppressed, is a tremendous ques-

tion for them.

In the pamphlet *Jesse Jackson, the Right Stuff for U.S. Imperialism*, I said that the Jackson candidacy represented the coincidence of interests of the imperialist rulers of the U.S. and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata among Black people whom the rulers have been propping up since the '60s. Today the class basis for his campaign remains the same, but the situation has developed further.

To begin with, the overall crisis has resulted in the continuing deterioration of the economic and social situation for the majority of Black people. At the same time, vicious repression and racist assaults directed at Black people have intensified. Related to this, there is increased restiveness among the Black masses. But on the agenda is more repression and more

Is Jesse Jackson a product of mass upsurge or an instrument of control and counterinsurgency?

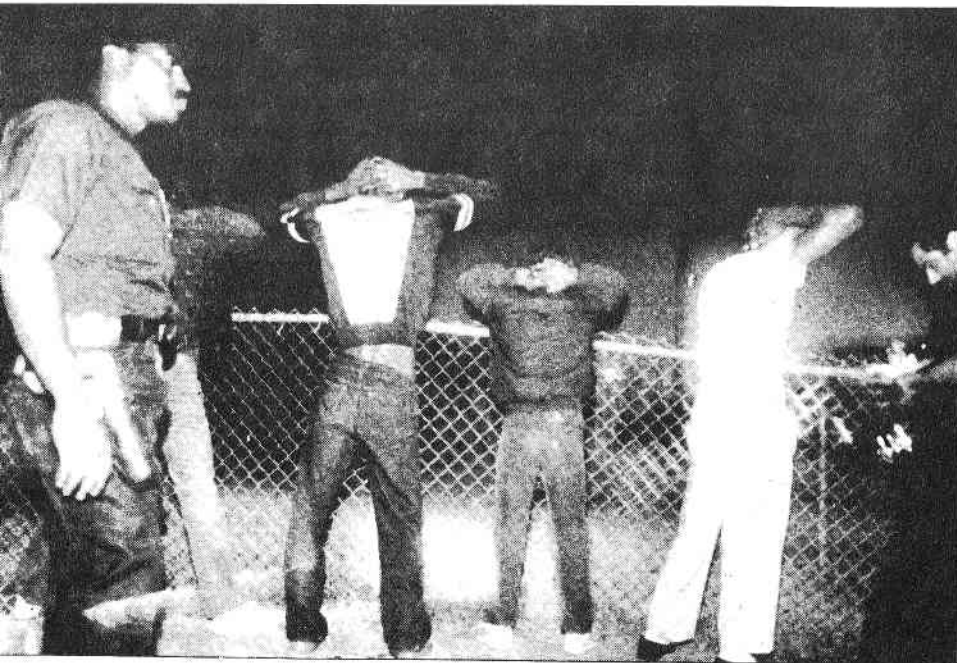
savage austerity, even if it is given a “human face.” Finally, there is no white politician on the scene — no FDR, Humphrey, or Kennedy — who can claim to be a champion of Black progress.

This is the situation the ruling class is dealing with, and Jesse Jackson is the man for the job. What the ruling class needs is a cross between Martin Luther King and Gatsha Buthelezi of South Africa. (Buthelezi is the leader of the reactionary Inkatha movement who “opposes” apartheid from *inside* the apartheid system and whose followers have attacked and murdered forces who are really going up against the apartheid regime.) The system needs someone who can pull the wool over the people's eyes and front for their attacks while also issuing threats (or promises) of even more vicious attacks in the future. This is what's behind the ruling class's talk of Jackson's “new-found political maturity,” and why his grouping of advisers has grown to include a number of Democratic Party insiders (like Bert Lance, political kingmaker from the Carter administration, and Ann Lewis, former head of Americans for Democratic Action and one of the Democratic Party's most important strategists).

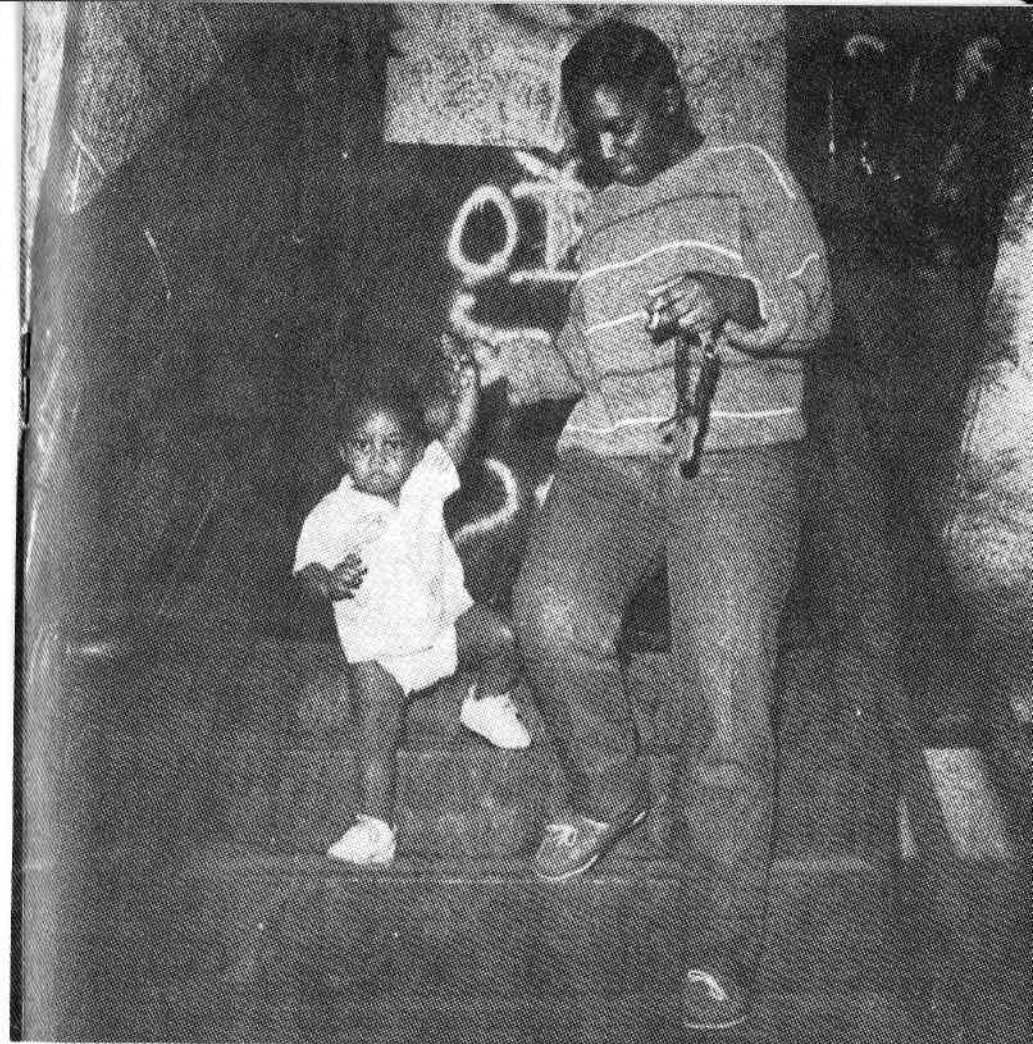
These are the interests that lie behind Jesse Jackson in '88. It is crucial that we grasp this, because as Lenin said: “People always were and always will be the foolish victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics until they learn to discover the *interests* of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political, and social phrases, declarations and promises.”



Harlem, New York



Police sweeps in Los Angeles.



In the Robert Taylor Homes, Chicago.

*The one campaign promise and about the only one of Jesse Jackson's promises which will be made good on is that which calls for more **repression** and **brutality** against the oppressed in the name of the "war on drugs . . . on crime" . . . and so on.*

Let's Be For Real — The Jackson Track Record

Jesse Jackson's program is tailor-made to play his role for his imperialist masters. His main theme is Make America Better, Keep America Strong. Jackson's well-advertised reform proposals are a mix of three main ingredients:

- Pure and simple demagoguery, like calls for vastly increased social spending and programs to legislate away poverty and racism.

The Jackson candidacy represents an insurance policy taken out by the rulers, damage control in the face of potential explosions.

- Policy recommendations which in most of their specifics do not correspond to the main direction of imperialist planning but which do connect up with important adjustments underway by the ruling class. For instance, Jackson has called for a five-year freeze on military spending, which is obviously not about to happen, but he has also called for more "bang for the buck" in military spending and insisted that Western Europe and Japan spend more for defense — and these *are* concerns of the U.S. imperialists.

- And, finally, proposals which are very much and very high on the imperialist agenda, like the drug crusade and crackdown.

In all, Jackson's program is a poisonous and deceitful blend of idealist appeals, U.S. No. 1 chauvinism, and camouflage for reactionary assaults on the masses.

In the international arena, Jackson has made a point of criticizing Ronald Reagan for not providing firm and competent leadership in defending U.S. national interests. "We have a strong enough military and a weak commander-in-chief," is how Jesse puts it. He charges that Reagan has left the U.S. dependent on foreign sources of oil and allowed the U.S. to lose its competitive edge against Japan in the world market.

What would a President Jackson do in various global hot spots? "The 40,000 U.S. troops in South Korea must remain there as a bulwark against communism," said Jackson at the 1987 PUSH national convention (at a time of upheaval in that country). "If the reports [of a Nicaraguan invasion] were true, I'd back up our ally Honduras," with troops, if necessary, declared Jackson. And further, "I would want all foreign troops removed [from Nicaragua]. No Soviet bases in the country. If they chose to violate

their neighbors, they'd meet stiff resistance from us." And on the Persian Gulf: "We're the strongest military in the world... Our boys are vulnerable in the Persian Gulf going up and down the river every day being looked at down the gun barrel of American-made guns sold to the Ayatollah illegally. We've got a strong military and a weak commander-in-chief."

As for Jackson, the pie-in-the-sky demagogue — it should be noted that since the rulers needed Jesse as a serious Black candidate but not a winning one (after all, this is still Amerikkka), he is able to offer up proposals that have no real chance of being implemented. But even with this relatively greater freedom, during the early primaries he kept his rhetoric in check. He basically stayed on the level of criticizing U.S. multinational corporations for doing "economic violence" to the poor and charged the Reagan administration for being insensitive to the needs of the poor in the U.S.

After the primaries, when the nomination was settled, Jackson upped the ante quite a bit. He was calling for a freeze on military spending and for new taxes on the rich to fund increased spending on social programs, ranging from education to AIDS research to drug enforcement. But Jackson approached these and other demands more as symbolism to keep some of the more radical elements in his base in the fold. At the convention there may be some "floor fights" over several of these symbolic issues, but the Jackson forces have chosen "unity over purity," deciding to focus their fire on the way delegates are given out in the 1992 elections.

Make no mistake about it. The one campaign promise and about the only one of Jesse Jackson's promises which will be made good on is that which calls for more *repression* and *brutality* against the oppressed in the name of the "war on drugs... on crime"... and so on. This is not to say that there won't be any concessionary programs in the period ahead, but this has very little to do with Jackson. The main attraction the American political establishment sees in Jesse Jackson is to use him as a "war horse" for repression.

Jesse and the Drug Squad

The Los Angeles Police Department has been conducting ongoing sweeps in south central L.A. since February of this year under the code name Hammer. In these sweeps to date they've arrested over 12,500 Black and Latin youth, mostly for "crimes" like littering, loitering, spitting on the sidewalk, etc. While campaigning in south central L.A., Jackson repeated his promise to hit "gangsters" and "pushers" harder than they could imagine if he were elected. No wonder L.A. police chief Daryl Gates said recently that Jesse Jackson discusses the drug problem "the way I feel about it."

The war on drugs is a crucial part of the repressive positioning and anti-people maneuvering of the ruling class. And Jesse Jackson plays a crucial role in this fascist crackdown against the oppressed communities. Jackson's "action" on the question of drugs does double duty for the imperialist rulers. First, he puts the blame for the capitalist system's flooding of dope into the oppressed communities on the victims. Speaking to Black youth in Harlem in April, Jesse said: "When we push dope on the street where we live, we make the neighborhood a slum. . . . We lost some lives to the southern rope, but we've lost more lives to northern dope." Quoted in the April 16 *New York Times*, Jackson says, "With slavery we were degraded by other human beings and now with drugs we degrade ourselves." Second, by blaming the victims, Jackson justifies all the vicious attacks the rulers are driven to launch against the oppressed. . . and the openly *political* clampdowns to come. According to the Jesse Jackson logic, the oppressed can escape all this mess if they only want to, so those who get caught in the War on Drugs or any other part of the rulers' clampdown deserve everything they get. Listen again to Jackson from his Harlem speech: "Voting for me is voting for a drug fighter. Every crack pusher can expect to get cracked when I become president. You'll look for a job or job training, because I won't take it. Down with dope, up with hope."

Jackson often half brags and half complains that his rivals are copying his message. This in itself should set you wondering how radical or even progressive his message could be if open representatives of the ruling class could copy it. He especially claims leadership in the War on Drugs. "Bush, Dukakis — they're captains; I'm the general in this war."

Calling the scourge of drugs the worst threat to U.S. national security, General Jackson calls for further militarization of the U.S. borders and involvement of the military in stopping drugs on the waters off the U.S. coast. Also, Jackson has endorsed vicious police clampdowns in a number of cities across the country as having to be done to end the demand for drugs. Through Jackson the ruling class hopes to enlist the oppressed people in this country in their own repression and enlist the support of the oppressed people here for all sorts of imperialist crimes against the people of the world in the name of the "war on drugs."

Jackson has been so bloodthirsty in his calls for a clampdown on the drug issue that leading Democratic and Republican senators joined together to salute the role he's played. At a Senate committee meeting on June 18, Ted Kennedy said Jesse Jackson "has really been the ambassador to our children on the dangers of drugs." At the same meeting, Republican Senator Orrin Hatch called Jackson "a great leader in the war on drugs" who should be appointed national drug czar. (Both quotes from the *New*

York Times, June 19, 1988.) If Jackson is an acknowledged leader in that army, why should anybody who opposes what this system does to people here and around the world think that they can accomplish anything by following him?

The Front Man for Repression and National Oppression

A lot of honest and progressive people feel that the very emergence of a Black candidate in a society in which racism is so deeply engrained is a positive development and that by supporting him we can strike a blow against national oppression. It's all the more tempting to think this given the real racism that has been unleashed during the campaign.

On the eve of the New York primary, Mayor Koch of New York City said that "Jews would be crazy to vote for Jackson" and that "if Jackson were president, his policies would bankrupt the country in three weeks." At the same time, supporters of Michael Dukakis began to argue that a vote for Albert Gore was really a vote for Jackson — hinting not too subtly that it was time for white voters to rally behind a single white candidate to stop Jesse.

From one side, this underscores the racism that this society is rotten with. It's the 1980s and still it is unthinkable that a Black person could really be considered as a candidate for president. (Hasn't a society that promotes that kind of thinking been around too long?) From another angle, however, this kind of racism adds fuel to the fires of the Jackson campaign by giving it the appearance of not being under the rulers' thumb, which gives it greater appeal to many of those dissatisfied with this setup and the way it forces millions to live.

But what in fact is Jackson saying, or not saying, about the situation of Black people? Today we're in the midst of an upsurge in attacks on Black people by the system's direct enforcers, the cops, and by racist mobs and individuals. Yet the candidate who is almost universally considered as representing the concerns of Black people has said little and done even less to condemn and oppose these attacks. In the wake of Howard Beach, Jesse had this to say: "We must move beyond the battleground of race-conscious behavior on to the common ground of economic progress. Instead of confronting one another at the pizza parlor, we must march together to the factory gates. Howard Beach and Harlem are two sides of the same coin — and both sides have been devalued by Reaganomics." Later, in his speech declaring his candidacy, Jackson discussed racial violence in the 1980s:

Twenty-five years ago the critical issue threatening to tear our country apart was racial violence. The South was the battleground, but the war against racial

violence was a national war — as we soon learned. Twenty-five years later, racial violence is illegal. When racial violence does occur — such as in Howard Beach, N.Y., or Forsyth County, Ga. — it's illegal and the perpetrators are put in the judicial system, tried and given their punishment. *Racial violence is moving in the direction of racial justice.* Just as we replaced racial violence with racial justice, we must replace economic violence with economic justice.

But Jackson isn't only saying that national oppression is largely behind us, or that what remains of it can be solved by the system. As in the case of drugs, he blames the victim: "When we drop paper and don't pick it up, when we drop babies and don't raise them, then we turn where we live into a slum. But the slum has to be in the people before the slum can take place where you live." Jackson, like the conservatives, lashes out at crime, teenage pregnancy, unstable male providers, and out-of-wedlock births in the ghetto and says these things are evidence of bad character. This kind of thinking and his plea for "less indifference" from Washington fit well within the post-Reagan consensus. It gets pretty disgusting. From his Harlem speech: "I also understand that even dogs raise their puppies. If you make a baby and won't raise it, then your character is lower than a barking dog." Clearly, Jackson's concerns here aren't to expose and condemn the situation faced by the oppressed, particularly the youth. This thinking more ties in to the concern of the rulers that millions of oppressed youth in the ghettos are not under the thumb of some authority figure.

The "moral tone" of the Jackson campaign sounds at times a lot like Jerry Falwell and "tough love" principal Joe Clark from New Jersey. Jackson wants discipline for kids, the restoration of parental authority, and a strong nuclear family. The view that comes across is that the model is a two-parent family that ought to be headed up by the now-absent (and "irresponsible") Black male, and that deviation from this norm is responsible for "social breakdown" in the Black community. Underlying Jackson's family values message is a lot of patriarchal garbage, and it's especially poisonous when you consider that half of all Black children are born out of wedlock and that female-headed households are very widespread in the Black community.

BUT...

"BUT isn't Jackson at least stirring things up, getting people moving, and raising important issues like South Africa and Palestine?" In fact, it is developments in the world, including struggles of the oppressed worldwide, that raise these issues. The Intifada injected the struggle of the Palestinian people into mass awareness, just as the uprisings of the Azanian people had earlier made South Africa a burning question among different sections of people in the U.S. and throughout the world. The point

is not whether Jackson is raising issues but in what direction is he taking people and with what aim is he discussing these issues.

Jesse Jackson doesn't expose and indict the American empire, much less encourage struggle against it. He prettifies U.S. imperialism. He talks about an America being true to its principles and seizing the high moral ground in world affairs. And let's not forget the valuable service Jackson has provided his masters. Remember his "rescue" of CIA agents and drug dealers from Cuba in 1984? Or his job getting Navy pilot Goodman freed from Syria so that he could get back on the job dropping bombs on Arab villages?

"BUT Jesse has to compromise to get over with the Democratic Party leadership. He has to play by the rules and temper his positions. At heart he's a lot more radical and if he got into office would do much more."

The point is not whether Jackson is raising issues but in what direction he is taking people and with what aim he is discussing these issues.

There are three short answers to this: U.S. imperialism is not going to let Jesse Jackson be the president of the United States, that's not his assigned role; Jackson's program and politics serve imperialism and must be opposed; and the ruling class counts on people believing that he is something other than what he is in order to promote passivity and illusions about the system.

"BUT white workers in the rust belt and white farmers in the farm belt, as well as whites from the middle classes, have supported Jackson. Isn't this a positive development?" In a sense it is. It's a good thing if white people who never would have dreamed of associating themselves with someone who is popularly identified with the struggle of Black people have broken with some racism. And as racially polarized as this society is, many honest people, Black and white, have a real and deep yearning for unity and see Jackson as a vehicle for achieving it. But this too, it must be honestly said, is part of the Jackson bamboozle. The real question is how can the proletariat win broad forces to its side — not deliver them over to imperialism — and unite on the basis of combating all the evils of this system, and the system itself.

"BUT what if Jackson gets shafted in a racist way at the convention?" This just goes to show the depths of racism in the institutions of America. The ruling class could even discard a Jackson as quickly as they built him

up. But this doesn't make Jackson or his program any more of a solution to the problem of national oppression.

The Stakes: For Us and for Them

The rulers are playing a dangerous game with high stakes here. Jesse Jackson is the product of the very desperate requirements of a ruling class facing crisis, conflict, and upheaval. The high-wire act that the rulers must pull off is ensuring that Jackson's run continues to suck people into supporting their system without building up hopes and expectations that might get out of hand. Because given the overall situation they confront, such hopes will have to be dashed quite quickly and thoroughly. And Langston Hughes already raised a question that haunts the rulers when considering this situation: "What happens to a dream deferred? . . . Does it explode?"

There is great potential that all this will blow up in the rulers' faces. Many of those who are now supporting Jackson don't share his desire to serve the interests of America's rulers. Many, particularly those from among the Black middle strata, view Jackson's candidacy as a way to strike a blow against the rulers' system, or at least at how it has oppressed Black people. (Such a view is not correct, but its widespread existence confronts the rulers with greater complexity.)

We have to be clear that Jackson's candidacy in no way aids in advancing the struggle against the oppression of Black people or the struggle against any of the other miseries that this system forces millions worldwide to endure. The electoral road has already proven that it won't lead to any end to national oppression or any of the other ills this system makes people put up with. From 1965 to 1982 the number of Black elected officials in the U.S. leaped from almost none to over 6,000. Over the same period the conditions faced by the majority of the Black masses have at best remained static but more often deteriorated on virtually every front. Black income has remained about 60 percent of whites. The unemployment rate for Black people has remained almost twice that of whites. The number of Black families living below the poverty level has increased sharply. One out of every thirteen Black people is arrested over a year's time. This direction has not only continued but accelerated. *And someone wants to say that this losing strategy is something that people should keep pursuing?*

But traveling the electoral road is even worse than useless. It's a dangerous trap. Because it aids the rulers in isolating and suffocating many of those who have already given up on working inside the system to change things. And because it is a vehicle through which the rulers divert the activity of many who want to work for change onto a path where they end up strengthening the rulers, helping to justify the vicious attacks being

launched against the oppressed today and the even more vicious clamp-down that the rulers have in the works for the not-so-distant future.

"Jesse Jackson in '88?" It's got to be said straight up: What's so inspiring about presiding over or even trying to reform the American empire? Why have so many lowered their sights so far that they will try to justify Jackson's maneuvering for a better seat at the master's table? *Just because the ruling class needs to try to use Jackson's candidacy doesn't mean that we have to be chumps for it!* Especially at this point in history, when the very real contradictions and potential for upheaval that compel the ruling class to promote a Jackson may well, and soon, provide us that chance

"Jesse Jackson in '88?" It's got to be said straight up: What's so inspiring about presiding over or even trying to reform the American empire?

of a lifetime to strike at the jugular of this system. That's what we have to be preparing for.

Those who see the Jackson candidacy and the whole electoral trap for what they are have to do more than just avoid them. They must work to expose this whole thing for what it really is, oppose it and rally others to oppose it as well. Those who really do hate the misery and degradation endured by countless millions in the U.S. and worldwide and really want to end all that have to sharply confront the reality that the electoral road is a sure path away from that goal. Doing this is especially urgent given what's at stake, the real possibility that this society in the near future will be thrown into crisis and upheaval.

And that is why it is all the more important that people have to get down with a program that can really end all this madness: revolution. As Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP, put it:

Those who tell Black people and other oppressed peoples in the U.S. that they can win equality and emancipation within this system are telling them a lie that is contradicted by hundreds of years of history and by present-day reality. The subjugation of whole peoples is an integral part of the development of capitalism and imperialism; it is part of the very foundation and the entire edifice of U.S. society. To abolish this requires that U.S. imperialism be overthrown and this whole oppressive society radically transformed — nothing less."

From Bullets: From the Writings, Speeches, and Interviews of Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

*Appendix**

Can't Get No Election Satisfaction

Election 1988. Feeling Black and blue in America. There was a Black presidential candidate and without a doubt the oppression of the masses of Black people in America is getting worse in every respect. Seemed like the Democrats were stringing people along with a big balloon of enthusiasm over Jesse Jackson — then the balloon popped. The selection of Lloyd Bentsen is a stark reminder that this system is racist to the core. Black and blue in America.

But there's something else . . . There's the pain that comes from false hopes. Lots of people were thinking that the emergence of a serious Black contender in a society where racism is so deeply engrained was a positive development. Lots of people were thinking that by supporting him they could strike a blow against national oppression and reignite the struggle for some justice. But it had nothing to do with that. It has to be said — and while the truth sometimes hurts it can also be liberating — Jesse Jackson is part of the problem, not part of the solution.

From the jump, racism was built up in the election campaign. It was a crude and open debate: Can a Black man achieve high office in America? Can a party win with such a candidate? It's the 1980s and still it is unthinkable that a Black person could really be considered as a candidate for president. Hasn't a society that promotes that kind of thinking been around too long?

Then Dukakis picked the senator from Texas as a running mate. Texas

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Lloyd is basically George Bush. But Black people are told to get their hopes up in 1988 because he opposed the poll tax in 1948. The choice was conscious symbolism: a signal that people who put their hopes in the Jackson campaign are going to be disappointed but they are welcome to support the Democratic Party. Many people correctly saw this as an affront. But Dukakis did not make a *mistake*: the selection of Bentsen was a stark and painful reminder of the nature of the beast.

There is a built-in racist component to the politics of national electioneering. It was openly talked about that it was more important for the Democrats to appeal to disaffected Reagan supporters than it was to satisfy Black people. Black support is taken for granted in order for Dukakis to pick up a conservative social base. All the political experts insisted that any "winning ticket" must appeal to forces they call "white male southerners." People *know* what that means. It means that central power in the White House must be in the hands of people who are committed to *not disturbing* the deepest roots of Black oppression.

It was just another signal: a modern-day signal from a system which has sent a thousand signals every day about how the oppression of whole peoples is an integral part of the American way of life.

And what should people do with their anger? Are the oppressed going to allow it to be channeled back into this rat race of backroom negotiations

The oppressed are sometimes all too willing to be strung along because it seems more possible than actually confronting reality.

for Jesse Jackson getting a bigger piece of the action? Are they going to go along with "try harder next time," or "be realistic, this is the only way to finesse our way to some kind of influence"?

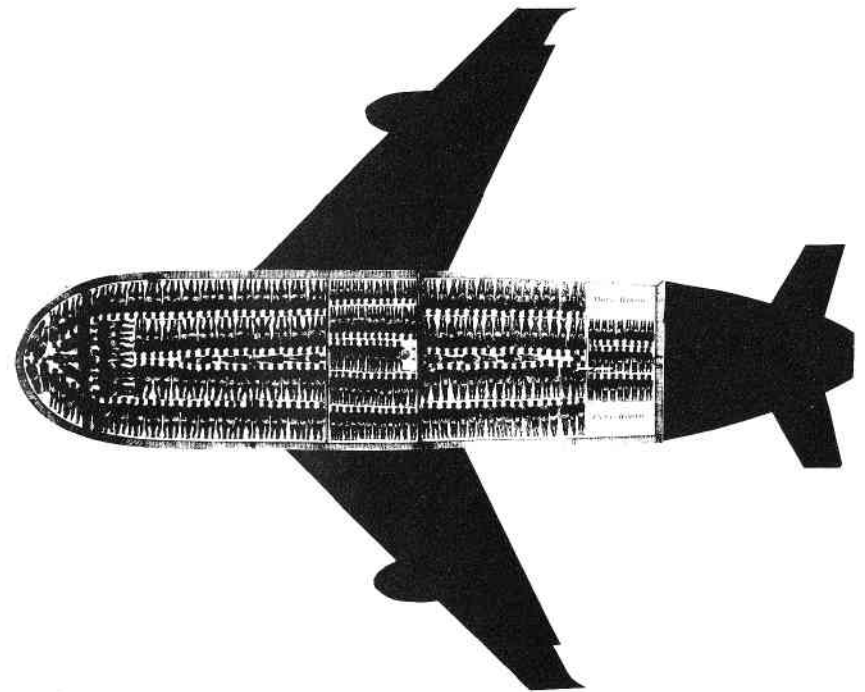
The imperialists and their flunkys surely take the masses of people for granted, but the oppressed are sometimes all too willing to be strung along because it seems more possible than actually confronting reality. It's not that the system blew its last chance. It's not that the system should be given another chance. It is a liberating truth that revolution is the only way out of this madness.

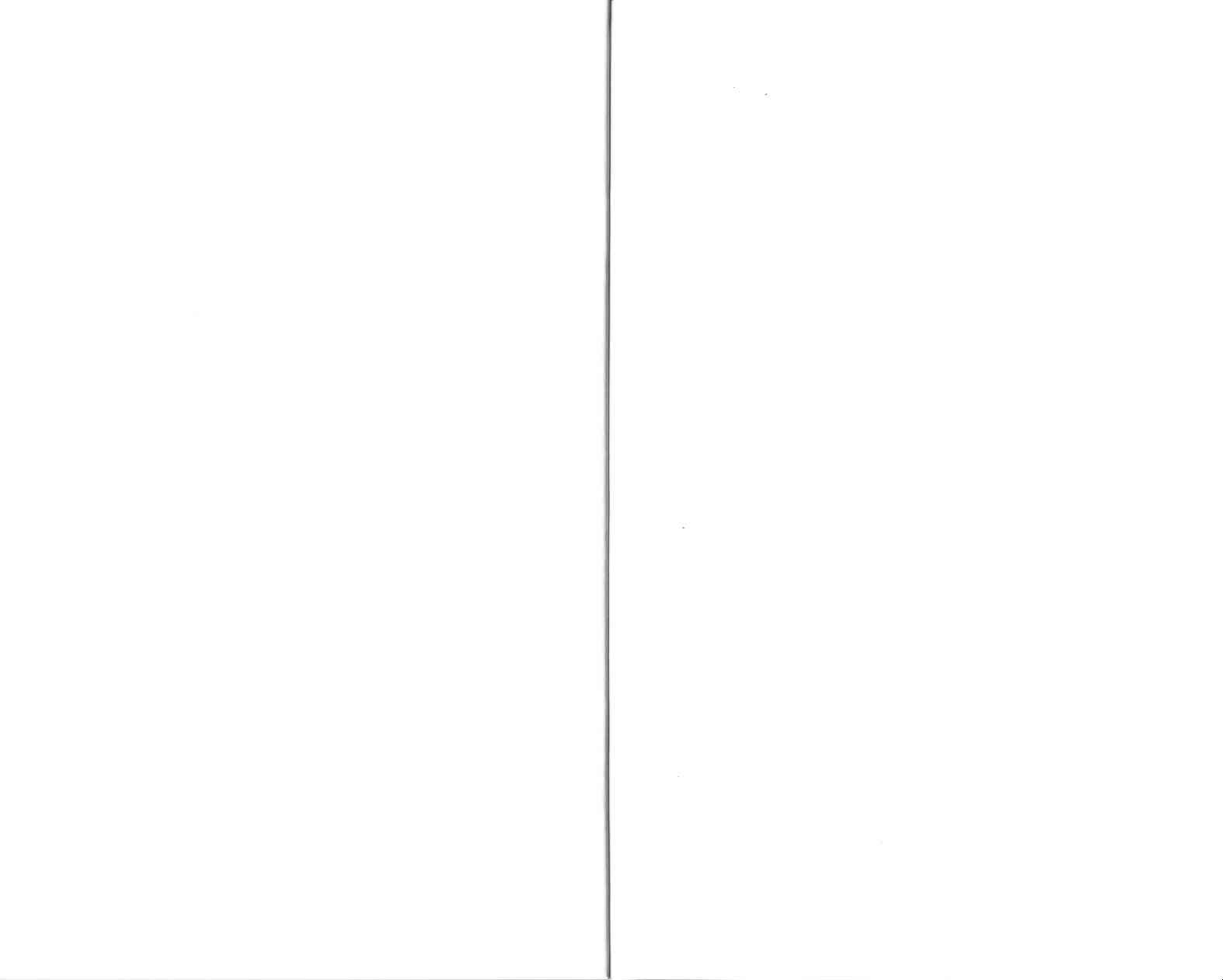
It wasn't in the cards for JJ to be Vice-President. But in the final analysis it wouldn't make a difference. It's part of keeping people locked into this system. Carl Dix, the anticandidate, has analyzed this in the article "Dial 1-800-JESSE. . .": "What if Jackson gets shafted in a racist way at the convention? This just goes to show the depths of racism in the in-

stitutions of America. The ruling class could even discard a Jackson as quickly as they built him up. But this doesn't make Jackson or his program any more of a solution to the problem of national oppression."

And Jesse was sending a message too. What was his response to the VP situation? He called the choice of Bentsen "a definite signal to the establishment and to big business, and that is *legitimate*." He wants a partnership with the Democratic Party. "They've got the right wing, I'm the other wing and it takes two wings to fly," said Jesse Jackson.

But where is this airplane going? Some people want to believe that Jesse is doing all these things to teach the people about the nature of the system. It looks to us like a high-tech version of the old slave ship.





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