

MAYOR WASHINGTON'S BID FOR RE-ELECTION

Will the Democratic Party Survive?

by Abdul Alkalimat

INTRODUCTION

A second term for Chicago Mayor Harold Washington is a matter of great political significance. The upcoming mayoral election is a test of how mainstream political parties respond to new politics and the use of Black Power to confront and defeat the fundamental ills of this society, especially white supremacy and unemployment. Given current levels of race and class conflict, and the weak coalition holding together individuals and groups across lines of class and race, one has to question the viability of the two mainstream political parties, especially the ailing Democrats. And, one has to question what kind of Black Power is necessary to get the job done.

It is clear that the current crisis is a continuation of the last days of the Daley machine. The key question then as now is, can a coalition be organized to hold the Democrats together when the main trend seems to be racial polarization in the midst of a deepening economic crisis? The difference between then and now has to do with who holds the key to the coalition. Daley was white, Washington is black.

ABDUL ALKALIMAT (Gerald McWorter) is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Alkalimat has done extensive research and publication on the development of Chicago politics, some three volumes of source materials and analysis. They are available through Twenty-First Century Books and Publications, P.O. Box 803351, Chicago, IL 60680.

While blacks have been the most loyal voting bloc for all Democratic candidates, the role of blacks as elected officials is restricted mainly to representing only blacks, not to having control of the entire political system. Blacks are wanted as voters, but not as leaders. This is a critical issue in Chicago at this time. The leader of the Democratic party in Chicago has raised the slogan, "Anyone except Harold" to the extent of considering running himself as a Republican. The black community has responded with "Nobody else but Harold." White racism threatens to force blacks out of the Democratic party.

Regarding the history of black politics in the U.S.A., the first fight was for the right to vote, and then it was to elect black officials for black majority legislative districts. We are now in the era of blacks trying to take overall political control as mayors, governors, or as president. Will this be a reform that the system can absorb and remain the same? Or will this fight escalate into a struggle for a new political party, precisely because no existing one will embrace Black Power? The current struggle in Chicago will yield important lessons for black politics of the 21st century.

This article is a general introduction to the current struggle in Chicago. After a brief survey of the historical background, there follows discussion of the 1983 primary election, the 1983 to 1987 first term of the Washington administration, and some key issues of the current campaign for his

second term. The issue is twofold: Will Harold Washington win a second term as Chicago's first black mayor? And, will the Democrats survive as a viable political party for black people?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The black population of Chicago has been a major factor in the historical development of the city. One indication of this is that there have been black elected officials in Chicago since 1871. However, now blacks in Chicago have joined with Latinos to create a new political majority. The black proportion of the Chicago population increased from 14% in 1950, to 23% in 1960, to 34% in 1970 and to 40% in 1980. In 1980 Latinos made up over 12%. This black population increase has been the greatest factor leading up to black involvement in electoral politics.

Black community social institutions developed from 1900 to the 1930s. The black community of Chicago was organized with its own organizations and leadership, mainly centered around churches and businesses. Out of these black organizations emerged a leadership that expressed race goals, demands to benefit the entire black community. This was a critical front of defense, since all black people were subject to vicious forms of racist oppression. After the 1954 Supreme Court decision seemed to "outlaw" racial segregation, integrated civil rights organizations became a popular leadership model. Although the black church was at the center of this civil rights action, it remained also the main social base for Black Power. The mass civil rights movement helped increase the popularity of the NAACP and the Urban League.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

This new civil rights leadership was at odds with the established black politicians. From 1963 to 1971 there were six blacks out of 50 on the City Council who were dubbed by the movement militants "the silent six." Black representation ex-

panded through the election of black independents. In 1969 Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party was killed in a raid set up by the Democratic State's Attorney. In 1971 there were 14 blacks on the City Council, roughly the same proportion as the black percent of the voting age population.

The critical political factor here was mass struggle. One significant example was the movement to improve the quality of the school system. The entire school system was shut down by two successful mass boycotts of the Chicago public schools in 1963 and 1964. The critical difference between the two boycotts can be measured by responses from leadership and social classes: unity in the first boycott, and division in the second. While the first boycott was nearly unanimous, the second one had black middle class families defecting to follow "the silent six" in opposing the boycott. The second boycott was looked upon as radical and identified more with poor working class blacks. This militant black protest was a profound rejection of the leadership of the Daley/Dawson political machine.

Both mass struggle and the new independent members of the city council were attacks upon the near dictatorial rule of Richard Daley, the Irish mayor who was elected to a record six terms. This was deepened when one of the silent six broke ranks and publicly split with Daley over a case of racist police brutality against one of his personal friends.

THE BLACK MAYOR MOVEMENT

The death of Daley led to new possibilities, including a black mayor. At least three successive black members of the City Council had been given the largely ceremonial position of Mayor Pro Tem. However, the city had no plan for succession of office in case of the elected mayor's death. So, when Daley died the black Mayor Pro Tem, Wilson Frost, decided to go over and take over the Mayor's office. He was confronted by white, armed, uniformed Chicago police, who stopped him. (Where was the Afro-American Patrolman's League?) A deal was made whereby Frost agreed to settle by

dropping his claim to become acting mayor in exchange for chairing the powerful Finance Committee.

But there has been no easy answer to who will rule after Daley. The first replacement was Michael Bilandic. Bilandic represented Daley's ward in the City Council and was chosen as a compromise candidate by the Democrats trying to save the machine. He was the 4th consecutive Chicago mayor from the Irish 11th ward. Bilandic bungled the job, and failed to hold the voting blocs together. A protest vote defeated the machine regulars when Jane Byrne (a Daley protegee) was elected in 1979. She was a reform candidate who pledged to fight corruption in government and add new levels of representation for women, minorities, and the neighborhoods; but, after the election she made her peace with the machine. Byrne worked hand in glove with party leadership and gave in to white racism.

Further, while the Democratic machine was getting weak, with no solid replacement for Daley, and no expansion of patronage jobs, more pernicious forces of oppression were gaining ground from the far right. For example, Chicago has been the headquarters of the main Nazi group in the U.S.A., located in the infamous Marquette Park area. And for that matter Daley himself had fascist tendencies. He had once ordered the cops to shoot to kill during an outburst of black community violence against white racism. The Nazi group must have felt encouraged by Chicago's climate.

The stage had been set: the 1960s was the time when mass struggle led to getting more black political representation; the 1970s was the time for the expansion and social transformation of the black middle class; and the 1980s decade is the time for the mass motion to surge forward for black political power.

THE 1983 CAMPAIGN

Blacks in Chicago, as in most of the U.S.A., went into the 1960s fighting to survive, and be included into the political mainstream of American life. There was

little or no motion toward being in control, as political power was thought of more in terms of proportional representation. As the black population increased, the black voting base expanded. The possibility of taking control became evident, and a serious committee to explore a black mayor was formed as early as 1974. The first major test came in 1977 when Harold Washington made his first bid in a special election following Daley's death. White power continued to survive in Chicago, but it was clearly in danger of losing its grip.

The promise of reform under Byrne was exposed as another misplaced hope black people had in the white political leadership of regular Democrats. What is most important is that this political exposure was led by community based activists and based on mass mobilization.

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RESURGENCE OF MASS PROTEST IN THE 1980s

Issue	Problem	Protest Action (Dates of Greatest Intensity)
Health	Deteriorating health services and facilities. Problem becomes more critical as cuts in health services increase.	Spring 1980, mass demonstrations are held. State officials are brought in to hear local community testimony in 1979, 1980.
Education	Black representation on Board of Education. Struggle for democratic control over education.	1979–1980, mass protests, petition drives are launched. During 1982 opposition to Byrne’s appointment of two whites to Board replacing blacks.
Public Housing	Black representation diluted by Byrne on CHA Board. Conditions in public housing worsening.	Spring-summer 1982, stormy series of protest actions escalate, leading to arrest of many activists.
Streeter Campaign: 17th Ward Politics	Byrne attempts to unseat alderman for opposing her appointment of Janus-Bonow to School Board.	May-July 1982, a black-led citywide coalition defeats Byrne’s candidate in the primary and runoff.
Black Businesses and Jobs	Underpinning the status of black representation are issues of inequality of job and contract opportunities for blacks.	August 1982, a 14-day boycott of Chicago Fest led by Coalition to Stop Chicago Fest and supported by a white-Latino “Committee of 500.”
Unemployment, Welfare	The economic crisis and the Reagan-Thompson budget cuts represent a direct attack on the standard of living.	August-September 1982, exposures of Reagan-Thompson-Byrne links to domestic cuts and diversion of public resources into politician’s coffers.
Private Housing Reform	A large percentage of Federal Community Development funds are retained to support machine politicians and patronage, as well as investments in central business district.	August-September 1982, administrative complaints made; protest at Mayor Byrne’s office and media campaign launched against repeated “reprogramming” of CD funds to meet other political objectives of Byrne’s administration.

These mass struggles all led to city hall, and turned into the fight for a new mayor. A ground swell developed for a Washington draft, a consensus was built that only one candidate could run and have a chance of winning. Harold Washington became that candidate. However, as a seasoned black politician he knew that the critical issue was votes. In the 1977 race only 27.5% of all eligible blacks voted when Washington ran unsuccessfully, and only 34% voted in

the 1979 Byrne victory. This was a serious problem.

Massive voter registration drives turned the mass protest into an electoral protest. Black voters were mobilized. While everyone increased their political mobilization, it is clear that black people were the leaders. Not only did black people surpass whites in registration but in election day turnout as well. What Washington wanted, and needed, he got.

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF RACIAL-NATIONALITY GROUPS

Registration and Turnout as Percentage of Voting Age Population 1979-1983

	Registration			Turnout		
	Black	Latino	White	Black	Latino	White
Primary 1979	69.4	31.5	77.4	34.5	18.3	50.6
General 1982	86.7	35.1	78.3	55.8	20.9	54.0
Primary 1983	87.2	36.1	82.2	64.2	23.9	64.6
General 1983	89.1	37.0	83.2	73.0	24.3	67.2

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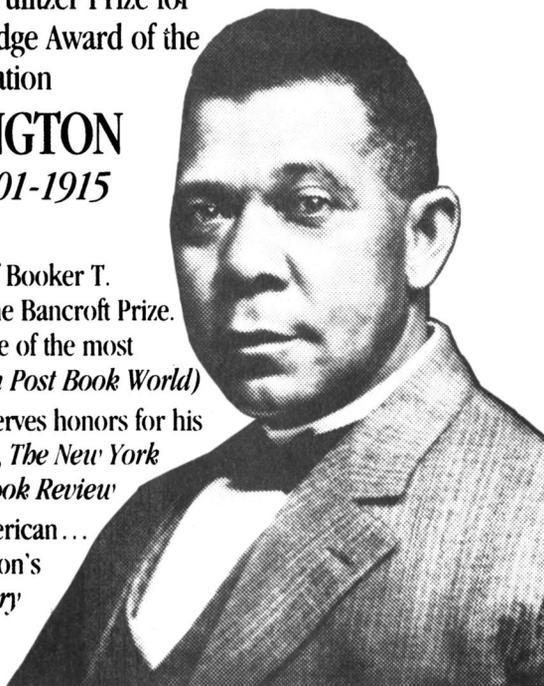
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The 1983 primary was between Harold Washington, and two major white Democrats, the incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne and a sentimental favorite Mayor Daley's son Richard Daley, Jr. This was important since Washington needed a split white vote to win. Out of 1.3 million votes cast, Washington got 36.6%, Byrne got 33.4%, and Daley got 30%. Washington got 80% of the black vote, 24% of the Latino vote, and 10% of the white vote.

A RACIST CAMPAIGN

Racism was on the rise in the primary, but white people did not expect Washington to win so the panic button was not punched until after the votes were tallied. At this point the leadership of the Democratic party in Chicago fully emerged as the new northern dixiecrats. They made it clear that a Republican takeover of Chicago would be preferable to black power by Democrats. This was a crisis of major proportions, and called into question the viability of the old coalition that had been in place since Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and strengthened by John F. Kennedy.

The Republican candidate was a Jewish millionaire, Bernard Epton, a former liberal and friend of Harold Washington. He could have been a sacrificial lamb to the absolute dominance of the Democratic party in Chicago, but because of racism he became a serious alternative to Washington. White leaders of the Democrats were mainly silent, or openly in support of the Republicans. This was one of the most racist campaigns outside of the Southern states. Further, much of the Republican campaign was aimed mainly at discrediting Washington. It became a mud-slinging racist brawl.

In the general election Washington got 50.06% of the votes cast (668,176) votes while Epton got 46.4% (619,926) votes. Because of racism white Democrats voted Republican, and threatened to tear up their party. Washington stood up to vicious political and personal attacks and came through strong ("only the strong survive").

He was not a "teflon" politician, but he

had overcome his past problems and maintained an excellent record in support of progressive legislation. Moreover, he was deeply rooted in the tradition of black politics, and therefore was in a leadership position to mobilize and maintain a united black community while working on building a new coalition with Latinos and progressive whites.

WASHINGTON'S POLITICS

It is also important to point out that while Washington was a progressive Democrat he was not a revolutionary. He formed leadership bodies that reflect his desire to move policy forward through consensus within the system. An example of this is in his main campaign committees. His campaign was dominated by a different leading committee at each of three successive campaign stages.

The first was the Task Force for Black Political Empowerment, a group of black militant political outsiders. This functioned as a street force to mobilize black voters, for protesting any weakening of black unity, and as a vanguard to offset the absence of the black middle class.

The next committee was the Campaign Steering Committee, led by the black elites. This was the main strategy body by which the black middle class articulated its design for taking political power in alliance with supportive Latinos and whites. This was led by the old civil rights leadership who had both challenged and worked with Daley 20 years earlier.

But when it came time to set up the transition team to plan the new Washington administration, the dominance of the black elites in the steering committee was replaced by white elites. Many of these white elites, or people from their firms, served on the previous transition team of Jane Byrne. Washington was seeking Black Power within a broad alliance with the major business interests of the city, as had all previous mayors. It is clear that this was a significant

alliance in the spirit of old Mayor Daley, especially when the political forces were so divided and in conflict.

Indeed, with the election of Mayor Harold Washington only one of the four levers of leadership for political power had been seized. In addition to the mayor's office, there was the City Council, the city hall bureaucracy, and the Cook County Democratic organization. This meant that Washington was on the field, but the game had just begun. While carrying on this battle he has worked to develop a positive profile with the business community. Washington's deal for the economic elites involved increased affirmative action and more of an equitable deal for neighborhood economic development in exchange for balancing the budget, keeping bond ratings up, and working for a positive business climate.

FIRST TERM 1983-1987

The main pattern of the first three years was set in the first council meeting. Washington adjourned the meeting when it was clear that he would be outvoted by a hostile majority led by his chief Democratic opponent, the chairperson of the Cook County Democratic organization Eddie Vrdolyak. Washington and supporters left the room, after which "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak seized the mike and the majority bloc of 29 passed new floor rules, and allocated committee positions, making sure they controlled the City Council.

This was generally sustained through a court challenge by the Washington forces. The other side of this power struggle is that Washington had the right to veto all legislation. The majority bloc didn't have enough votes to overturn a veto, so while Washington didn't have control, neither did the majority bloc. The courts became the arbiter of political decision making. This struggle came to be called "council wars" between the majority 29 and the Washington 21. It dragged on for more than three years!

THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM

Power in Chicago politics has long been associated with patronage, i.e., the allocation of city jobs as political favors in exchange for some form of personal or political service, usually to family members or workers in a local ward organization. After years of fighting in the courts, the courts issued the Shakman decree against patronage, in favor of protecting government workers from political pressure. This was a good decision on how things ought to run, but under such a new rule Washington was being forced to run his administration with hostile city workers loyal to the white machine.

Major appointments began to shake things up, especially in new black leadership for the police department and in the Chicago Housing Authority. Further, Washington has used all new hires to the city payrolls to increase the number of blacks, Latinos, and women at unprecedented levels. He has opened up city employment, and membership on tens of appointed boards. In fact, a significant sector of the mass movement leadership who worked for his election has moved inside of city government.

However, the majority bloc held up most of the major appointments of progressives to boards for the first three years of the Washington administration. But things did begin to change. A black member of the City Council was indicted for embezzlement and Washington appointed one of the main black community activists to fill the position. This was a controversial struggle, but in the end she took her seat in the council and began to raise "hell."

The critical turning point came as a result of the court approved plan to reappportion the ward boundaries to increase minority representation. The new elections shifted the balance of power to a 25 to 25 tie between the two council factions, including a 2-2 Latino split. Thus, Washington has the breaking vote. Things began to move forward, but the edge was as slight as one could get.

The critical break in the old patronage system came in the struggle to control the

Park District. Washington appointed a white liberal board president, and a militant community activist-cultural leader to turn the board around. They hired a new administrator who challenged the old boss, Ed Kelley, who was also the Democratic party boss of the 47th ward. This was a struggle over a large budget involving as many jobs as all of city hall, and park facilities in every ward of the city. The courts ruled in Washington's favor. It looked like reform was finally coming to Chicago.

The "court intrigue" filled the newspapers as the main battles seemed to be inside of city hall, the jockeying for positions of power and political advantage. But, in the city all of the old conflicts were still there, in fact intensifying.

WASHINGTON'S REFORMS

One consistent theme of Washington's first term is reform. But, while the potential remains great, and the results have been progressive, this administration still is marked by the old evils of dirty Chicago politics. Corruption is as at home in Chicago as is the Vienna Red Hot Dog. Former city officials and a former governor are among the many convicted felons. Judges often appear in court as accused criminals.

Under Washington there have been many accusations and pending court hearings—directed at some who oppose him (e.g., Larry Bullock, a black State Representative who was the bag man for Jane Byrne and Vrdolyak to pay off a black street gang to attack Washington campaign workers), and some who support him (e.g., his closest associate turned out to have a criminal record and has been involved in constant scandal, and indictments were brought in against his former Corporation council and several current members of the City Council).

Washington has not been implicated directly, but the reform image of his overall administration has been questioned. In Chicago this will not mean much, as Washington is the cleanest politician to come along in Chicago in decades.

Some forces in the white community per-

ceive that Washington is setting up a new anti-white patronage machine for blacks. These whites have been getting the lion's share of public support, and it hurts when blacks, Latinos, and the left-out whites start getting a "fair share." However, it is the democratic right of excluded groups to use the democratic process to correct past inequities and redistribute wealth by getting contracts and jobs on a preferential basis. What exacerbates the whole situation is that the job base is shrinking—not expanding—so it appears as a "blacks win—whites lose" type of situation.

THE FUNDING CRISIS

The essence of what Washington has done is defined by the city budget and his effort to meet the needs of different social classes. Washington has balanced two opposite class interests with his budget and policy initiatives. His overall orientation has been to save the city by developing a positive climate for business. Within this, he has also argued that every community should have its fair share of public appropriations. Since all jobs and improvements have been concentrated in only a few wards, people notice a very big change when they are given equal treatment.

But equal these days means less. General funding has been on the decline from the Reagan federal government and the Republican governor has had an austerity orientation as well. Washington inherited an inflated city payroll and workforce that he cut back, laying off over 8,000 workers. An example is that he has increased the beds for the homeless but over 60% have no help and the numbers are growing, even if one uses conservative estimates.

Reaganomics has put the corporate model into the heart of American life, suggesting that it is a universal cure for problems at all levels of government. This has required a vicious campaign to destroy the trade union movement, and thereby remove the main basis of opposition to this corporate inspired social transformation. This is producing class polarization and is setting the society up for some explosive times. Several con-

crete examples might be useful to demonstrate how these contradictions are unfolding in Chicago.

THE DECLINE OF STEEL

The Chicago region is one of the great steel-producing areas of the world. But as with other parts of the U.S.A. the Steel industry in Chicago is in a deep near fatal crisis. In 1985, steelmaking employment in the U.S.A. was the lowest in the industry since 1933, and it will get much lower. In the Chicago area about 15,000 workers have been laid off since 1979. Further, this has resulted in the loss of 12,600 non-steel related jobs in the southeast side community where the mills are located. This area is 51% black, 32% white, and 17% Latino, with an overall unemployment rate approaching 25%.

Mayor Washington appointed a Task Force on Steel and Southeast Chicago. This report attempts to plan the rescue of the industry and the surrounding neighborhoods. Unfortunately out of 12 people only one was a trade unionist, while the others were lawyers, academics and corporate executives. But even with this composition, the committee does point to the bitter truth of a slow down in steel as experienced by working people. This is the most important point made in their final report *Building on the Basics*:

The whole city suffers from these closings: tax revenue is lost and, more important, so is the income that the laid-off industrial workforce once spent at businesses throughout the Chicago area. Still, the brunt of the suffering is borne by displaced industrial workers, their families, and their communities. Steelworkers are typically middle-income, blue-collar employees whose skills are not readily transferable to other industries. Recent national and local studies show that only one-half of displaced steelworkers have found new employment, even after several years of searching for work. Furthermore, over half of those who did find full-time work took pay cuts of at least 20 percent. The damage that accompanies such drops in income—loss of homes and cars, obsolescence of workers' specialized but nontransferable skills, termination of insurance benefits, reduction in aspirations

and opportunities of family members, not to mention the humiliation of no longer being able to provide for one's family—is incalculable.

The problem with the committee is that its solutions were limited to replacing the mills with the kinds of economic development that does not absorb the displaced steelworkers. This is a class question of whose interests are being represented.

YUPIES VERSUS THE HOMELESS

The general problem of deteriorating inner cities is a critical economic and social question. It is an under-utilization of valuable property, and somehow is a vital part of the self-image of any city. Areas where poor people congregate, especially the people at the bottom who seem to have given up, have been called skid row. Since urban renewal has dislocated the underclass, they are generally referred to as the homeless. Further, their numbers have been increasing.

On the western fringe of the Chicago downtown area is an area that used to be occupied by this underclass, and is now being developed for the yuppies. Since 1980, in a deal struck by Jane Byrne, the city joined with large scale real estate developers to redevelop a 15 acre area. This required demolishing 16 single room occupancy hotels containing nearly 3,000 units leased on a daily and weekly basis. In its place have been constructed four luxury apartment buildings containing 1,748 units called (appropriately so in this age of Reaganism) Presidential Towers. A critical community report notes that

Rents for these units range from \$513 per month for a studio to \$1,262 for a two-bedroom apartment. . . . [T]he typical tenant is a 28 year old male who earns about \$31,000 per year.

This project cost the city over \$100 million because of Jane Byrne's deal. She sold the land in 1980 at 1968 prices. This big real estate deal made profits for the developers, made luxury downtown apartments available for the yuppies and threw poor people out on the street. The

Washington administration has had to deal with this problem and others like it.

However, the general trend is bound up with the basic laws of capital accumulation operating with a stranglehold around the neck of every city. Who is needed to work? Who is the city for? Who will generate the new profits? These questions point to why capitalism is dumping the old working class, and cynically writing skid row "bums" off as being expendable.

The critical economic and social trend is down, with people at the bottom having little hope. A Northwestern University study called *Hardship and Support Systems in Chicago* (4 volumes, 1986) found alarming racial differences in this suffering:

is a deadline to file petitions as a Democrat on December 15, or as an independent by January 26th. The black community has one candidate. The issue is, how many significant white candidates? So, the cast of characters will not be set until the end of January.

Jane Byrne declared her candidacy as a Democrat almost two years ago. Acceptance of her candidacy hasn't been unanimous, so a great controversy has been made more complex. If another white candidate ran against Byrne, whites would split and Washington could win in the same manner as '83. So, whites are openly discussing how to have the best white Democrat, and if that fails, how to get the best white candidate to run as a Republican. The Vrdolyak faction—

WHO IS SUFFERING IN CHICAGO, 1986

	Black	White
1. eat less than the government minimum	20.0	5.4
2. couldn't pay the rent	20.7	7.4
3. utilities cut off	16.0	1.7
4. rats and roaches	17.8	4.0

The report is very clear on the racial implications of these differences:

Black families are more than twice as likely as white families to experience every hardship. . . . Overall, the gap between black and white families does not appear to be narrowing. . . . What disturbs us is the size of the gap. A large proportion of black families is suffering from serious material deprivations in food, housing, and medical access. . . . [P]ersisting hardships among black families should be a cause for special concern.

THE 1987 CAMPAIGN: A WHITE SPLIT?

This is the crisis facing Washington: factional fighting in the Democratic party, a deepening economic crisis, and heightening racist violence. How he faces this crisis will determine the meaning of his victories in the primary election in February, 1987, and the general election in April, 1987.

The election system sets up the structure of how parties will be used to express the interests of blacks and poor people. There

the new dixiecrats—are loyal to race over party.

The electoral set-up was challenged by Richard Daley, Jr., the old mayor's son, also the state's attorney. He attempted to change it to a general non-partisan race requiring a simple majority to win, followed by a run-off if necessary. The play was to allow the whites to democratically elect a white candidate who would then go one-on-one against Washington. Washington kept this referendum off the ballot.

Washington's best chance is to run against at least two whites. Granted the racist climate the only sure way of succeeding is for him to run as an independent, skipping the Democratic primary election altogether. Of course, my hypothesis is based on the assumption that both parties will field strong candidates. So the structure of the current primary system might well force Washington to run as an independent.

Different lines of analysis are emerging on this issue. One line emphasizes national

politics—building on the recent Democratic gains in the Senate to resist Reagan's policy initiatives. Another line is that black people should "seriously begin that long and agonizing effort to develop what has been talked about for so many years—a black independent political party." And a third line would argue that a new party should be developed based on realizing the true social democratic aims of the welfare state.

WASHINGTON'S SOCIAL BASE

The social basis for Washington's independence is a new citywide coalition called the Grass Roots Council, cochaired by a longstanding community activist and close associates of Mayor Washington. The neighborhood community organization is the foundation for political independence from the Cook County Democratic organization. Washington has created a positive program of partnership with these community groups, so they are likely to actively support his candidacy. Washington will get the black vote. Here the task is to get registration back up to the 1983 level, and to get a similarly high turnout. Also critical is the support needed from whites and Latinos.

This defines the formal character of the electoral arrangement. The content of the election in Chicago concerns the direction of economic and social development. Mayor Washington has stressed fairness to everyone, and he implements this in terms of equitable neighborhood development, and affirmative action. However, he also gives a great nod to a partnership with business. This partnership helps to push a conservative model in solving Chicago's problems.

WASHINGTON AND BUSINESS

The most recent example of this is a report by the Financial Planning Committee for the City of Chicago set up for the mayor by the Commercial Club and Chicago United. Their key concept is "privatization." This is

the contracting-out of the delivery of services to the private sector that were previ-

ously produced by the government alone. . . . The government retains control of the services; that is, the provision of the service remains a matter of public policy. The government also continues to finance, or pay for, the service, although the private sector actually delivers or produces the service.

And they go on to clarify why:

private contractors use fewer people; they use part-time workers; their overall compensation is less; and their material costs are lower.

This approach is totally against working class interests, especially black people. Certainly more unemployment is not what we need. Progressive forces have not yet produced such a comprehensive political diagnosis and plan of action. This is a great weakness that must be shared by the black middle class, the community activists, and the left. An example is the Finance Planning committee recommendation that the city increase the work day from 7 hours to at least 7.5 hours. The progressive solution is to move in the opposite direction, of shortening the work day or work week. Lengthening the work day is a way to squeeze the workers. Shortening the work day is a way to increase employment through sharing more equitably the resources of our society.

There was a unified black protest to elect Harold Washington, including building a powerful rainbow coalition with progressive whites and Latinos. This reform administration has been opposed by a unified racist leadership of the local Democratic party, the new northern dixiecrats. Washington is likely to run as an "independent" in the 1987 mayoral election for a second term. This certainly means independence of the local Democratic leadership, if not outside of the Democratic Party altogether. His program seeks a partnership for all of Chicago: city government, corporations, and communities. Because of racism there is solid black unity, and also because community organizations provide support in the neighborhood for the Washington administration. Washington must be reelected in order to defeat racism.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POPULAR POWER

A more difficult struggle is to consolidate power on the basis of broad-based democratic people's organizations. The corporations have their views on who owns Chicago, what goals to set and what methods to use. They believe they own, the goal is profit, and the main method is to turn the government over to them. What has yet to be developed in Chicago is an aggressive consensus to defeat the corporate privatization model. This means there will be a need to define the class content of black power.

The Washington administration faces serious problems. The way Chicago operates, corruption is an ever-present danger. "When whites ran the city they became millionaires. Why can't we do it?" And there is also the problem of party bureaucracy. Local political organizations can become ends rather than means, whereby jobs are more important than fighting for social change. It seems obvious that the basis of people's power in Chicago has to be outside of the formal government.

So, the people's movement working for a Washington victory has a clear opportunity to push democracy further along. It has the opportunity of smashing the local Democratic party and building a new system of representation—a new independent party. It has the opportunity of defining a new coalition of classes and social groups to build a new city. It has the opportunity of sparking a new national political movement independent of the Democratic party.

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1. We have been engaged in a research project dealing with Black Power in Chicago as part of the Cooperative Research Network in Black Studies. Our work has produced three documentary volumes of newspaper clippings and official documents on the 1983 primary campaign (406 pages), the general election (653 pages), and the debate carried out in the left press (272 pages). We also have an extensive bibliography (127 pages). During the campaign we sponsored a national conference on the general issue of black mayors and have a conference newspaper and draft proceedings (400 pages). We have published three studies so far: Alkalimat and Gills, "Black Power vs. Racism: The Election of Harold Washington," in Rod Bush, ed., *The New Black Vote: A Look at Four American Cities* (Synthesis Publications, October 1984), Alkalimat and Gills, "Black Political Protest and the Mayoral Victory of

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- There is a growing literature on the recent politics in Chicago. Paul Kleppner, *Chicago Divided: The Making of a Black Mayor* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), Holli and Green, eds., *The Making of the Mayor: Chicago 1983* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 1984), Gove and Massotti, *After Daley: Chicago Politics in Transition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982) and Gove and Massotti, *Chicago Politics in Transition* (forthcoming), and Florence Levinson, *Harold Washington: A Political Biography* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1983).
- There are several publications that are essential for the study of politics in Chicago:

- *Chicago Daily Defender* (2400 Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60616). This is the main black newspaper in Chicago.
- *All City Chicago News* (1140 W Montrose Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60613). Main community based support of Washington by white radicals
- *Second Term* (Room 644, 127 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602). This is the official newspaper of the Committee to Reelect Washington
- *Chicago Reporter* (11 E. Illinois, Chicago, IL 60611). This is the main newspaper of investigative reporting on matters of race and class inequities.

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