

# NEW YORK PARTY MOBILIZER



6th Floor • 235 West 23rd Street, New York, New York 10011 • (212) 924-0550

December 7, 1988

Following are excerpts from an article in the December 1988 Political Affairs by Comrade James Steele, legislative and political action director, CPUSA.

## The '88 Elections Summing Up and Charting Course

JAMES STEELE

**E**LECTION DAY HAS COME AND GONE. THE REPUBLICANS retained the White House; the Democrats increased their majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives. Debate swirls through the media and the mass movements as to what happened and why. Leaders of the two parties and the people's movements are moving to position their respective constituencies for post-election struggle, particularly in respect to the new Congress and next year's key municipal elections.

Though the outcome on the presidential level was far from what progressive forces had worked for, as the saying goes, "the struggle continues." It continues for the nation's working class and democratic masses. It continues for the victims of racism and discrimination, for the tens of millions living in poverty and despair, enduring homelessness, under-employment, and unemployment.

The struggle continues for the overwhelm-

ing majority of the American people, as well as the peoples of the world, who face in the Bush Administration a continuation—in one form or another, to one extent or another—of the policies and programs of the Reagan Administration. ...

This stark reality compels Communists to attempt an objective analysis of the results, of the key factors and forces which determined them, as well as of the main problems and prospects in the period ahead. ...

Despite the Bush victory, and certainly because of it, the people's movement needs to be guided by an assessment which sees the correct balance and interplay between the "good news" and the "bad news." For the future course of the electoral struggle, understanding this dialectic is key to unlocking the potential, channeling the anger, utilizing the experience accumulated, and broadening the unity built.

### CLUB EDUCATION DIRECTORS

will discuss the 1989 District Educational Plan of Work at our next meeting, to take place on Monday, January 9, 1989, (Not Jan. 2), from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, 235 West 23 Street. Please make sure your club is represented

The central challenge is to uncover the main trends, positive and negative, that impact on tactical considerations, the ideological struggle, and the relationship of political forces nationally, within given states and cities, as well as within different sectors of the mass movement.

... to help mold approaches and shape initiatives that enable the basic sectors of the forces of political independence to impart new momentum to the great democratic upsurge that the election results prove is still in process in our country. ...

While not in any way underestimating the obvious dangers implicit in a Bush-Quayle Administration, the labor movement and other people's forces can take comfort and encouragement in the fact that George Bush is not the same political personality or political force Ronald Reagan was at the onset of his administration. Our country is leaving, not entering, the 1980's. The experience of eight tumultuous years of anti-ultra-Right fightback will serve the mass movements for peace, jobs, equality and democracy in good stead in the period ahead. ...

In garnering 48.1 million votes, 53.4 percent of the total, George Bush becomes the first sitting vice-president in over 100 years to succeed to the presidency. Michael Dukakis, with slightly over 41.1 million votes or 45.6 percent, is the fifth Democratic candidate to go down to defeat in the last six presidential elections.

But, and this is one of the most important contradictions, Bush achieved a 426-112 Electoral College victory without winning a policy mandate. ...

The conduct of the Bush campaign and the record of the Reagan years alerted the people's movement as to what to may be expected from a Bush Administration. Shortly after the returns were in, the Rev. Jesse Jackson called for "the constituencies of the Democratic Party" to unite around a common legislative agenda to force Bush to create "a kinder, gentler nation." The AFL-CIO said that, "As always, the federation would defend the interests of America's working people." The National Organization for Women as well as several peace organizations are planning demonstrations for next Spring. Many forces are planning to use Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to launch a new mobilization against racist violence and for enforcement and expansion of civil rights legislation....

The Democrats increased their majority in the U.S. Senate by one seat and in the House of

Representatives by six. No party in 28 years had increased its congressional representation while losing the presidency. The Democrats also expanded the number of statehouses and state legislatures under their control. . . .

The overall results do not indicate a political re-alignment to the Right—let alone a shift to the Republicans—in mass voting patterns or mass thought patterns. The gross misreading by the Dukakis campaign and many Democratic leaders of where sizable numbers of voters are at politically is closer to the mark in identifying the causes of the Democrats' defeat.

How else explain the fact, for example, that Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, running against attacks on his very liberal record and progressive positions on most issues, could be re-elected by over 600,000 votes while Michael Dukakis, running away from the liberal legacy of the Democratic Party, lost the state by more than 475,000 votes?...

Moreover, liberal or progressive candidates came within 1, 2, or 3 percentage points of defeating rightwing Republicans in another half dozen or so congressional races. All of this, of course, is against the backdrop of Jesse Jackson—perceived by the public as progressive, if not Left—having polled over 7 million votes in the Democratic primaries.

In the basic sense, the presidential race was the exception to the rule. When the issues were clearly posed by Democratic candidates the electorate clearly favored liberals and progressives over conservatives.

**ANALYSIS OF VOTING PATTERNS PROVES THAT BUSH** was a fundamentally weak candidate. But it also highlights fundamental weaknesses in the electorate, not the least of which is its susceptibility to the influence of racism. Even so, the Vice-President succeeded only because he faced an opponent who was even weaker.

Most commentators point to Dukakis's shortcomings as a campaigner. Others note his untenable campaign strategy. Both weaknesses were self-evident. But more fundamental was his failure, especially as a white politician, to provide leadership in the struggle against racism.

While not resorting to racially divisive rhetoric, Dukakis and no small number of Democratic leaders and elected officials objectively contributed to enhancing the role of racism as a factor in the elections. The betrayal of the "common ground" reached at the Democratic conven-

Our nation's unique and continuing history, in respect to racism and national oppression, makes the struggle for unity to overcome their consequences a vital thread that runs through the fabric of all issues. The 1988 race for the White House adds to the already abundant evidence that failure to develop an alternative to racist influences is no longer a viable path to victory in presidential and most statewide contests.

... The critical question from this standpoint is how did the working class and its allies vote. Were they united? Did their leading organizations and leadership personalities correctly perceive what was at stake and mobilize accordingly? Were the organized sectors strengthened or weakened? Did they emerge intact or in tatters?

This was one of the most class-partisan elections in recent history. According to an ABC News exit poll, Dukakis won:

- 66 percent of the union household vote
- 89 percent of the African American vote
- 66 percent of the Hispanic vote
- 59 percent of vote of factory workers
- 68 percent of the unemployed vote

The organized working class voted overwhelmingly against Bush. A private poll, commissioned by the AFL-CIO, showed 69 percent of Federation-affiliated union members voting for Dukakis, and 68 percent of the voters in their households doing likewise.

On the whole, the Democratic ticket fared exceptionally well among industrial workers, union members, and racial minorities. In approximate numbers, Dukakis won 19.4 million of over 22.7 million union household votes. He took almost 11 million of more than 12 million Black votes.

This means the labor-African American alliance generated almost 30 million of Dukakis' 41 million votes. Add in the Latino 66 percent majority for Dukakis, the Jewish 67 percent and the women's 51 percent, and it becomes very clear that, in the main, the progressive sectors were not taken in by GOP demogogy; neither were they diverted or demobilized by Dukakis' inadequacies.

This response can only be explained by a higher level of class and political consciousness, by their level of political independence. But it is, perhaps above all, a testament to the strength and scope of independent political mobilization carried out by labor, African American and Latino leadership, and particularly by Jesse Jackson.

... One conclusion to be drawn is that the prospect for enhancing political independence is indexed to an increase in union organization. For instance, if union membership in 1988 was as high as it was when President Reagan took office in 1981, that may have been enough to have won the election for Michael Dukakis.

The figures incontestably show that the election was winnable for the Democrats. Labor, the Rainbow Coalition, Black and Latino leadership in general, supplied the base vote for Dukakis and the potential margin for victory. Absent their contribution and the Democrats most likely would have suffered a 535-3 electoral vote loss, winning only the District of Columbia.

What was missing was sufficient help from the candidate, a regular Democratic party apparatus that pulled its weight, and a more adequate contribution by the Left in mobilization and in ideological struggle. The performance of the so-called moderate and conservative wings was particularly dismal. There were states in which both U.S. Senators, the majority of the congressional delegation, the governor and most state legislators are Democrats, but where the ticket still lost by huge margins.

**THE MOBILIZATION STRENGTHENED THE ALLIANCE OF** the labor movement and the African American community. The joint action of central labor councils, individual locals and Black community organizations acquired new scope in many areas of the country.

... Black voters as a whole maintained their role as the most disciplined and politically independent sector of the electorate—disciplined enough to vote overwhelmingly against Bush in spite of Dukakis' treatment of Jesse Jackson, independent enough not to be sidetracked by the machinations of the Democratic leadership into voting against their self-interests...

Latino voter turnout exceeded the 80 percent mark. No doubt, this occurred in large part on the basis of the gains in Latino voter registration.

The Rainbow Coalition, despite endless provocations and insensitivity, also delivered for the Democratic ticket. In the general election, as during the primaries, Jesse Jackson provided leadership to broad constituencies of the American people...

It's instructive that over 91 million people cast ballots on the November 8th—but more than 93 million stayed home. This was the lowest turnout in 64 years. In fact, George Bush will become the next president with the support of only 26 percent of the electorate.

**FROM: THE NATIONAL ORG DEPARTMENT**  
**RE: THE HOLIDAY PARTY - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1988 - 4-7 P.M.**

We have begun preparing for our **ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY**. Between 600 to 700 guests pass through and are wined and dined at the event. Therefore, the earlier we know who has volunteered the smoother the event will run.

We are requesting each and every comrade to give us some time. If you have already signed up via your club, thank you. If you have not, please fill out the form below and also inform your club that you have done so and which chore you have chosen.

As usual, we expect every club to contribute at least one substantial dish (your specialty) and if possible, one homemade dessert. This should be at 23rd Street by 1:00 P.M. on December 29.

**CLUB/INDIVIDUAL  
FOOD CONTRIBUTIONS**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEERS (NAMES)**

<b>FOOD PREPARATION &amp; SERVING</b>	1:00-3:00	_____
	3:00-5:00	_____
	5:00-7:00	_____
<b>BAR</b>	3:30-5:30	_____
	5:30-7:00	_____
<b>COAT ROOM</b>	3:30-5:00	_____
	5:00-6:30	_____
	6:30-7:30	_____
	7:30 to dismantling	_____

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 28**  
**(ANY AVAILABLE TIME IN KITCHEN)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**EVENING, DEC. 28**  
**(SET UP COAT ROOM)**

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>SECURITY</b>	3:00-4:30	_____
	4:30-6:00	_____
	6:00-7:30	_____
<b>CLEAN UP</b>	5:00-6:30	_____
	6:30-8:00	_____

**PLEASE RETURN FORM TO ESTHER ON THE 7TH FLOOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
THANK YOU.**

The significance of non-voters is dramatized by the following:

- George Bush's 48 million votes is a drop-off of 6 million from Ronald Reagan's total in 1984. Dukakis's 41 million is an increase of 4 million over Walter Mondale's 1984 total.

- A shift of about 535,000 total votes in 11 states—California (154,921), Connecticut (36,105), Illinois (58,996), Maryland (20,132), Michigan (135,279), Missouri (38,562), Montana (10,739), New Mexico (12,132), Pennsylvania (53,685), South Dakota (9,942), and Vermont (3,374)—would have given the Democratic ticket another 160 electoral votes and the White House, despite losing by 6 million in the popular vote...

- New voters were the difference between Dukakis winning New York and losing California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.

- New voters and stay-at-homes could have overcome the negative drag that made non-voters a factor of narrow losses in U.S. Senate races in Florida, Mississippi, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming where Democratic candidates lost by 30,000; 56,000; 14,000; 25,000; and 1,300 votes, respectively. Wins in these states would have given the Democrats a 60-40 Senate majority.

- A two-sided question of some importance for the Left and progressive forces to ponder is: To what extent did sectarian and dogmatic concepts about relating to and working in the Democratic Party, and about the influence of notions like those promoted in the New Alliance Party candidacy of Lola Fulani, get in the way of full mobilization to defeat Bush? ...

The well-oiled and heavily-financed Bush machine benefitted from three critical factors:

- Application of the GOP presidential campaign propaganda strategies, adapted from tried and tested, CIA-like, disinformation and destabilization techniques

- Activation of racism and chauvinism, nearly unchallenged by the Dukakis campaign and the Democratic party leadership

- Overwhelming support from the mass media, reflecting overwhelming support of the main sections of monopoly capital

- The influence of racism and chauvinism were exceptionally consequential factors. The "Willie Horton" ads... evoked the most hysterical of racist stereotypes.

The "patriotic" ploy focused on Gov. Dukakis' veto of an unconstitutional law requiring recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. It projected a subliminal message aimed at the Democratic candidate's immigrant background....

**IN COMBINATION, THE RACIST AND CHAUVINIST** themes were extraordinarily effective. Dukakis won 53 percent of the Catholic vote, a figure which is weighted by his strong showing among Latinos. But he gained only 38 percent of the Protestant vote.

In the South, where the Bush campaign, the National Rifle Association, and ultra-Right groups concentrated their "He's soft on crime" and "He's against the death penalty" messages, Dukakis won only 32 percent of the white vote as against 43 percent nationally. Basically, the influence of racism helped decide the election....

In keeping the Jackson forces at arms length, Dukakis and the Democratic establishment were sending their own racist message....

It's not surprising that Black voter turnout was below the 1984 level, something shared in common with voters generally. What's astounding in this context is the discipline, objectivity, and independence shown by Jackson, Black leadership and those African American voters who did go to the polls.

The 1988 election is a case study in the use of racist demogogy and the lack of anti-racist leadership from white politicians, starting with Dukakis....

Still, it must be said that the anti-racist majority sentiment was not a factor in the presidential election. That does not mean that it was not evident, however. With the election of Donald Payne in New Jersey's 10th congressional district, the Congressional Black Caucus increased its number to 24. Though far from representative, it is the highest number of African American Congress members in history. All incumbent CBC members were re-elected by landslides.

What's more, Rep. Mike Espy, who was expected to face a tough challenge, was re-elected by a 66-34 percent margin. Interestingly, Espy, who two years ago became the first Black representative from Mississippi in over 100 years, won more than 40 percent of the white vote. In 1986, he took just over 10 percent of the white vote.

How does one explain Espy's performance among white voters when both Dukakis and Wayne Dowdy, the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, gained less than 30 percent of the Mississippi white vote....

Espy's advantage was his forthrightness on the issues and his unrelenting effort to serve as well as unite the people, Black and white, of his district. Espy's approach to the issues is very similar to Jesse Jackson's, whom Espy supported.

The anti-racist sentiment was also evident in Chicago in the resounding defeat of Edward Vrydolyak for Cook County clerk. Vrydolyak, now a Republican, was the leading foe of the late Mayor Harold Washington.

The main lesson to be drawn is that every racist current has to be challenged by an anti-racist counter-current. There is no evading the fact that multi-racial unity is the product of consistent and conscious struggle. Failure to wage a struggle against racism dooms those who shirk this responsibility....

But the size of the Bush victory does not denote comparable political strength. The incoming monopoly-capital administration is fundamentally weaker than its predecessor. ...

The fact that basic sectors of the people's movement strengthened themselves, gained valuable electoral experience, and enhanced their unity and resolve, emerges as a decisive factor in the post-election equation.... The election's political dynamics suggest that a basis exists for stopping a new ultra-right offensive. The changes in the political composition of the 101st Congress, coupled with the enhanced mobilizational capability of labor, the Rainbow Coalition, African American and Latino communities, and other people's forces, point toward the possibility of a congressional checkmate to the Bush Ad-

ministration on many issues. And, if necessary, for coalitions capable of over-riding possible vetoes of legislation in the public's interest or defeating judicial appointees who are not.

Regardless of its twists and turns, the road ahead requires a strengthening of political independence, broad grassroots-based legislative coalitions, and intense preparation by all the constituent forces of the Left and progressive movement for the coming electoral struggles--including fielding people's candidates.

Overall, there is a need to develop greater coordination between the diverse components and organizations of the people's movement. In this connection, the interests of the working class and the racially oppressed would be served by wider and broader joint action between the labor movement and the forces of the Rainbow Coalition in particular. This would facilitate multi-racial unity and extend the influence of progressive organizations over wider sections of the population. The combined political and organizational might of these two forces could set the people's movement on a course that can change policy, priorities and direction. [ ]

#### Jarvis Tyner, cont'd:

...This economic situation is going to worsen. A recession is coming. And this administration is going to have to handle it. So, in a sense, Bush is on the hot seat.

...This election showed we need a real independent peoples' party. If there had been in place a real people's party with a mass base, that would have been flexible enough to work with a Dukakis candidacy, a Jackson, and so forth, while maintaining its independence, this would have made all the difference in the world.

...If we had a numerically stronger and a more powerful Communist Party in the United States, that, above all, would help turn the tide on every front.

...I think in the next period everything must be done to see to it that our Party is built bigger and stronger; that we help in bringing forth the independent progressive line; to make sure that it takes on a life and that it reaches its full potential.

...We must play an active role in the coming struggle against the Bush Administration. We must help advance the struggle against Koch, and for political independence. Our role can make a difference in the life of our state and nation. Thank you. ☺

1988 N.Y. ELECTIONS - JARVIS TYNER

(Excerpts from Report to a meeting of the State Committee and club chairs on Nov. 10th)

...Despite great dissatisfaction with Dukakis on the part of the working people of our state they were disciplined...and sophisticated enough to go out and do what was right, under the circumstances. They saw the dangers. We should be proud that a majority of those who voted in our state think that way, and saw how we could bring things forward.

As well, Mike Zagarell and the Charlene Mitchell campaign on the Independent Progressive Line played an outstanding role in this respect. They built great campaigns, despite little money and a minimum of cadre on the campaign.

...The Independent Progress Line was a correct tactic all the way. It was an excellent way to build real campaigns of communist and non-communist participation. And like in the experience of many Communist Parties around the world, these left electoral forms are the best tactic for running communist candidates.

...Both Charlene and Mike were excellent. Charlene built a broad election campaign which has very broad contacts in New York. Her own contacts of years of working with the National Alliance, and living in New York and being part of the political life of the city, really paid off.

...Non-Party people and ex-Party, friends of the Party were brought physically into both campaigns.

...If you were at the rally in Harlem and saw the packed house, saw the composition of that packed house, you saw many new faces, many wonderful working class people. The same in Co-op City. Many Black and Latino folks were coming out to support this ticket, to support these candidates, knowing about our Party, and knowing where these candidates stand on the issues.

...The official vote is not in as yet. However, the votes that we have are impressive, e.g.

Westchester Co.	- 712
Nassau Co.	- 827
Monroe (Rochester)	- 481
Erie (Buffalo)	- 702

...Mike received approximately about 2 per cent of the vote in Co-op City. And we heard just the other day that the Yonker's paper published the vote for Mike, that he received 460 votes in the City of Yonkers; which I think is very good.

Indeed, the Party, and independent progressive candidates around the country, did very, very well.

...I believe the independent progressive form has a future.

...Now what does the future hold? Obviously, we want to be a factor in developing a coalition, a winning coalition in the 1989 elections that can defeat Koch. Exit polls showed 57% did not want Koch to run for re-election.

# DINNER and MOVIE

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ON CLUB CONFERENCES AND REGISTRATION

We propose that where possible, club conferences be held in February and March.

Before that time, we hope you will have the report to the Jan. 28-31 National Committee meeting, and as well as a NY District plan of work for '89 to help orient the club conferences discussions.

Because of the curtailment of staff we are not having a detailed registration procedure this year. However, to guarantee that the clubs get their membership books, and that we get some minimum information, we need to know the following by no later than Jan. 15, 1989. You can use this coupon OR simply bring us this same information. DO NOT SEND BY MAIL, PLEASE.

Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of members as of 12/31/88 \_\_\_\_\_

Number paid up in dues through 12/31/88 \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BRING EACH PERSON UP TO DATE)

Composition of members

No. of Black \_\_\_\_\_ Puerto Rican \_\_\_\_\_ Latino \_\_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_\_

No. of others \_\_\_\_\_

Composition by Age

No. under 30 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-64 \_\_\_\_\_ 65-74 \_\_\_\_\_ 75

Employed \_\_\_\_\_ # of Trade Unionists \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \*

TO ALL CLUBS AND COMRADES:

Attached is the agenda for the upcoming State Committee meeting on December 17.

All comrades and clubs are invited to communicate your ideas to any State Committee member or to the District office.

We apologize for the late notice.

- Agenda:
- 1) Approach to the 1989 local elections in New York City and key areas of the state
  - 2) Finances

Comradely,

The New York State Board



SOCA \* ROCK \*  
\* ROCK \* JAZZ  
SOUL \* R&F  
A \* 50'S \* R.  
A \* SOUL \*  
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OCK \* JAZZ  
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JAZZ \* SALS  
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# PARTY

## New Year's Eve 1988-1989

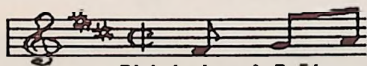
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Elena Mora  
Larry Moscovitz  
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Jarvis Tyner  
Atiba Weza  
Mike Zagarell

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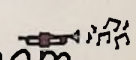
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
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