

Forward

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Editors' Note

Forward solicits essays on politics, cultural critiques, book reviews, original poetry, short stories, expressions of opinion and other articles of interest to the socialist movement. Manuscripts should be double-spaced, including footnotes of sources, if needed, and submitted in duplicate. Feature-length essays generally should number no more than 25 pages. All manuscripts will be read. Unused manuscripts will be returned if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included. Please submit material to *Forward*, P.O. Box 29293, Oakland, California 94604.

Jesse Jackson for President in 1988!

The campaign to elect the next president of the United States will be one of the most critical in history. Its outcome may very well influence the domestic and international direction of the country into the 21st century. The challenge is to defeat the openly pro-big business and militarist policies that have dominated the country for the past eight years under Ronald Reagan, and which the right wants to entrench in Washington. The task is to build a people's movement for peace abroad and democracy at home.

Of all the presidential candidates, Jesse Jackson is clearly the most progressive and the strongest fighter against the right. His candidacy can help forge a new majority coalition of democratic forces in this country. He speaks to the vital concerns of workers, minorities, women, peace activists, farmers and environmentalists. His "rainbow" politics are raising progressive ideas as well as mobilizing a social *movement* that has a chance of becoming a political force in the country. The base of the Jackson campaign is a base for sustained and vigorous opposition to the right.

What is Jesse's appeal?

Jesse Jackson's candidacy is fueled at the base by the massive and overwhelming support from African Americans. In the Super Tuesday primaries, in the heart of the old Confederacy, 97% of African Americans voted for Jackson. As no other Black leader today, Jackson has come to represent Black aspirations for democracy, equality and justice.

At the same time, increasing numbers of whites from

all classes are responding positively to Jackson's message. He has forthrightly spoken out against economic exploitation and for workers' rights. (His campaign has an inherent workers' thrust because African Americans are themselves overwhelmingly of the working class.) His economic program is based on a vision that places foremost the improvement of the lives of working people, not the naked pursuit of profits. He stands against intervention abroad, and for peace and self-determination. He has helped rekindle the spirit of human compassion and the desire for justice and fair play that have been so disparaged under eight years of Ronald Reagan.

Results from the primaries show that Jackson's support is substantial among white voters. He won 31% of the vote in Maine, 26% in Vermont, and attracted strong support in Iowa and Minnesota, all states which are 99% white. Jackson has also strengthened the strategically critical Black-Latino alliance. In Texas, he received 25% of the Chicano vote.

Jackson is no socialist, has no pretensions of being a socialist, and will probably never advocate socialism. But this does not detract from the importance of his candidacy in fighting against the right and for democracy.

The struggle for Jackson to become the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party is a tough one. The media has continuously downplayed the significance and seriousness of his campaign and the issues he has raised. At the same time, his growing popularity cannot be totally denied, and the worries of the racist and right-wing forces in this country are mounting dangerously. Jackson is campaigning at great personal risk and sacrifice, and the people who support him must have no illusions about the attacks and perils that lie ahead.

We endorse Jesse Jackson for president. We encourage all our readers to get out and do something for his candidacy. By so doing, we can help strike a blow against Reaganism and the right, and for justice and our future. We will contribute to building a people's movement.

In this vein, we are delighted to carry in this issue of *Forward* several articles on the 1988 election and the Jackson candidacy. Poet/playwright/revolutionary activist Amiri Baraka provides a fascinating and inspiring look at the long history of his relationship with

Jesse Jackson, and how the two have developed over time. Baraka illuminates some of the driving dynamics of the Black Liberation Movement, which has been so influential in shaping the country.

Our interviews with Congressman Mickey Leland of Texas, former head of the Congressional Black Caucus; Toney Anaya, former governor of New Mexico and prominent Chicano spokesperson; and Kenneth Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees and one of the leading labor officials in the country, offer candid and lively views about the coming election generally, and on the Jackson candidacy specifically.

The Black-Latino alliance is critical to the struggle against the right and for any movement for social change. One of the most vital issues before Spanish-speaking peoples today, as well as all minority and progressive peoples, is the fight against the efforts to make English the official language of the United States. The article by Theresa Montaña and Dennis Vigil describes the origin of this "English-only" movement and its dangers, and presents some ideas on how it can be fought. Montaña and Vigil show that the English-only movement reinforces national oppression and divides the people along language and national lines. Multinational unity is built, they show, by opposing national inequality and oppression, not through the forcible suppression of the cultural and language rights of a minority nationality.

The third major section of this issue of *Forward* is devoted to Chicano culture. The movie *La Bamba* suddenly focused the media's attention on Chicano music. But as Onofre Antonio Abarca's personal look at Chicano music shows, the musical tradition of the Chicano people has a rich and vibrant history that goes back many decades. Also featured are several original pieces of writing, including a short story based on an oral folk tale, "The Curse of Pancho Villa," and poems by several Chicano poets, including noted poet Alurista.

Anne Adams
Carl Davidson
Michael Lee

JESSE

JACKSON

'88



JESSE 88

Amiri Baraka

Repeatedly, while waiting for myself to rise totally to the occasion of catching up with presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, I used images of our long time friendship and varied association to fuel the dynamic which would embody the questions I would ask.

Thinking about Jesse in Iowa, I thought about farmers and “straight out” Americans. How would that be? Jesse with the straight outs?

There was no question in my ultimate mind dialed conclusion that Jesse could handle it. How remained as such, intriguing, its “How?” self.

But it is the feeling for America — ever been in Iowa, boy?

Yeh, drove through there — me and my family in a brand new '78 Chevy stationwagon.

Nothing. Cow odor and corn. A couple stops. Except the music, like when you get too far from the cities — ugly shit!

It was a con puzzle feeling. Like would there be some kind of *con* involved? Some snake oil, or lugubrious backing away from reality that would pass for public non-offense. Some merits (for Niggers!) You too. Unless caught widout your people somewhere out there, no gun neither — could you survive?

It's like Howard Beach is part of the white faces and twang. How do black people walk up to white, regulation Americans and deal with them

Revolutionary poet, playwright and activist **Amiri Baraka** is the editor of *The Black Nation* magazine and a leading member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle. His most recent book is entitled *The Music*.



Jesse Jackson during his college days at North Carolina A&T.
Photo: North Carolina A&T University

like they're intelligent — like both you and them are? Perhaps impossible!

Would the Iowa America be like on television but able to immediately, kill?

Reading about New Hampshire, I tried to imagine Jesse there — some how hidden by cold white nasty distance creating meta-objects. Was speech still possible? Can, and at what speed, would African American speech travel?

Or would anything with a head as cold as it would have to be in New Hampshire hear? What would shiny or slick or fast breathing, deep feeling words sound like?

Could they be heard? (And as what?)

Can snow understand the sun? Is the water or angelic vapor rising the heaven of divine transformation these devils must experience to reintegrate themselves with rhythm — therefore turn on hearts — beat life into them, preventing the conflagration of Human Society.

**

Chicago does not only exist in America and this is its spice, its promise, its threat to the evil empire, at least its section marked "exclusion."

Jesse, Farrakhan and Harold Washington. When Harold fell (and Jimmy Baldwin and John Killens), it struck me how powerful Black people were in Chicago.

It is the northern capital of the Black Bourgeoisie, i.e., not New York. Fake integration — as Weldon Johnson analyzed in *Black Manhattan* weakens the socio-economic strength of the Black owners in New York City.

But Chicago is as segregated — from was to is — as classical north America. There, deeper and stronger consolidation of a intra communicating self reproducing Black business and professional class developing through economic focus on the African American community can be found.

There is a deeper wider more fundamental economic national consciousness in Chicago, that in NYC is more strictly limited to pre-60s Garveyites.

Chicago, historically called “The Second City” (now LA is 2nd in population) then has always in essence been in tune with “Second Class” citizenship.

And then when we know that this cold burg was founded by a black explorer, DuSable — further irony. Because we know this would never be a first choice.

All this as part of a background of judgement and analysis as to who and why Jesse Jackson is so important and significant to the world, despite all efforts to preach the contrary — especially by a general “American” backwardness posed like whip cream atop the head and navel of U.S. society.

He is important, as whatever kind of American he is. Whatever kind of person. Yet it is as an African American he is most easily and finally identified.

His very “inelectability” out of the mouths of so many fellow travellers of white supremacy and privilege does not hide the ineluctability of what Jackson is and represents! His fame has come from activism in the “Civil Rights Movement.”

If a Black cannot be elected President, then Baldwin was right, the American Dream *is* White Supremacy. More background would be helpful here, so that Jesse Jackson’s biography can show the development of his

A massive Black empowerment movement swept Harold Washington to his 1983 victory as Chicago’s first Black mayor.





Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Rev. Jesse Jackson.
Photo from UP WITH HOPE, a book by Dorothy Chaplik

thinking, leading to his candidacy for the presidency. As well as America's development and tragedy.

Jackson's presidential candidacy is one implied and expressed general presumption of the movement. Suppose Dr. King had run for president (allowed to live) or even Malcolm X?

Or suppose Farrakhan runs for Mayor of Chicago? Even the most militant of the 60's Black Liberation Movement activists called for Black Power. It is the *method* which was always in contention. But by that also to say the content, which suggests and shapes methodology and form.

Jesse Jackson knows the U.S. is not a democracy. Unlike the various white candidates who say it is one even if it aint for, you know, poor people, niggers, spics, chinks, women, &c.

For this reason, people need and desire the Rainbow that Jesse has set in motion. Not only because of Jesse, but because that is why Jesse is valuable to them in the

first place. Because he seems to be strong enough to put together finally a multi-racial, philosophically progressive, well-organized spearhead to further the deep aspirations of not only the African American people, but Americans of whatever nationality who are clear enough to want to openly express their feeling that American society is in deep need of complete change!

Jesse's public image enlarged with the building of his *Operation Breadbasket* in Chicago. It was his declaration of independence from the King family and the older SCLC minister-operatives after King's murder.

At the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco, the contradiction between Coretta King and her support for Mondale (along with Andy Young) and Jackson's own popular candidacy emerged. She spoke at one black leadership caucus and said there was no single leadership focus in black America. Directly across the table from Jackson.

At the open black delegates caucus her defense of Mondale, even invoking the name of her martyred husband brought cries of outrage from black delegates, particularly the black women!

Breadbasket was SCLC religion powered social awareness and activism brought to the black northern "capital." Side by side, as a reflection of black class formation with Elijah Muhammed's *Nation of Islam*.

A black economic strength based on a black bourgeoisie, from John Johnson and *Ebony*, *Jet*, *Negro Digest/Black World* to George Johnson, AfroSheen, black hair products. Heavy connections as well with the Daley machine and an independent black politics that elected Harold Washington, Mayor!

Jackson's campaign is as much a measure and description of American society as King's campaigns. The violent legal apartheid King fought has been rendered impotent and so has been replaced by propaganda and rhetoric and out of favor grant losing social programs whose elimination is blamed on the poor and the needy and the oppressed nationalities.

Jackson is a veteran of the struggle and victory over American Apartheid. He is a *statesman* and a qualified and beloved black leader! Opinions about him define both the oppressed and the oppressor in this country.

Black people know a great deal about Ronald Reagan, as they did Carter, Ford, Nixon, LBJ and JFK. Ask them to choose, the majority, between those names and Jesse Jackson. They know for sure Jackson is *smarter* than Reagan — definitely better looking. In San Francisco before a group of black car dealers Jackson said the only thing Reagan could beat him doing was "taking afternoon naps." The crowd roared!

Black women, including his beautiful sophisticated wife, Jackie, want Jesse so much because they know most women would have to dig him. But not like this!

The Civil Rights and 60's and 70's Black Power and Black Liberation Movement was a social upsurge that also created an economic advance, as well as political gains for the African American people.

A legacy of 60's black mass struggle was the strengthening and expansion of the black middle and upper classes. There was also the clear advance in electoral politics. A Black Congressional Caucus for example could be formed as black congressional representation expanded with more significance than at any time since Reconstruction.

Black mayors began to be elected in major cities. Hatcher-Gary: Gibson-Newark, &c. And as the bloody 60's confrontations that caused American Apartheid to retreat and disguise itself drew less intense as the 70's moved along, the movement developed a thrust toward new political organization aimed at electoral politics and economic development.

I met Jesse 1st during the period of the Black Power Conferences, during the 60's. By 1969 as chairman of the Committee for a Unified



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., naming Rev. Jesse Jackson to head Operation Breadbasket of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Cirilo McSween, at right, was appointed treasurer. Photo from Jet magazine

Newark (CFUN), I took Ken Gibson, Newark's future 1st black mayor, to Chicago for the national coverage that *Operation Breadbasket* by now could provide.

Jesse brought black celebrities, actors, entertainers, civil rights leaders, charismatic ministers to Breadbasket. He was intimate even during the earlier civil rights movement with black and white media stars since SCLC routinely got them to do fundraisers. But at Breadbasket, post MLK, Jesse became the focal point. His constant economic activism, his calls for "economic democracy" and political background raised him very publicly into the living pantheon of black leadership.

He was also a bonafide personality in the black glamour set. At home with Muhammed Ali, striding up the aisle in Las Vegas with a baseball cap on, or hanging out with Sidney Poitier or Harry Belafonte aided and abetted his rising political profile but added to his own star status. It gave him an aura of the glittery fame available only to the media and entertainment giants.

Jackson is not only at home with black religious leaders, rights activists, labor figures, but virtually every major black politician in

the country. For black people and many others he is a genuine star!

What's more, a great many of these figures, important themselves, look to Jesse for political guidance! It was not an isolated relationship, for instance, that could find late jazz immortal Julian "Cannonball" Adderly saying that "Jesse Jackson is my leader!" Spoken with a trace of levity, fitting the relationship, but definitely sincere.

It is this broad gamut of relationships with the very key figures in the black community, internationally, that provide definition of Jackson's strength.

But what is also clear and needs to be emphasized is that Jesse Jackson is respected, even *loved* by the majority of black people! Certainly in this country, but I'd add Africa and the West Indies and anywhere else in the African diaspora.

My wife, Amina, returning recently from the beauty parlor told me this: At one point in the free flowing multiple dialogues that are the musical score and spontaneous scenario of beauty shops, one sister called out, "Any black people got a license to vote, in these times, and dont vote for Jesse Jackson oughta be tarred and feathered!"

Raised fists came out from under dryers to affirm and further animate the proposal. A male T-shirt selling black nationalist named Luqman served as cheer leader!

"I'm gonna make a T-shirt about you, Demetrius (the beauty parlor's proprietor)! If you wanna find out what's happening in the black community you gotta come here!"

During the Gibson *Community's Choice* campaign in Newark in 1970, Jesse and his "Operation Breadbasket" Band came in to Newark and helped create the dynamic for the election of the 1st black mayor of a major north eastern city. Earlier, when Jackson introduced Gibson to his Breadbasket constituency, he joked about Gibson's hickish appearance, "highwater" pants and a close haircut in the midst of "Afro" time.

Jesse himself had an Afro during that popular black upsurge and frequently wore dashikis. He could talk to the militants as well — Malcolm, Karenga, Carmichael, Huey Newton,

As part of his early civil rights activities, Rev. Jesse Jackson demonstrated for economic opportunity at the national headquarters of A&P in New York City.



Bobby Seale. Tho some were critical and even wary of him because he always had his own agenda.

Some of them thought of him as a media opportunist who was building a self aggrandizing pork barrel reformist institution. But Jesse was a legitimate member of the broadest United Front of black progressive movement. His influence and prominence were already recognized by all.

In 1970 the Operation Breadbasket band came to Newark a couple days before the election and were an important element of the final dynamism of that peoples' victory. Election night Jesse strode into central election headquarters (CFUN's "502" High Street offices) like a jubilant cabinet member. He spoke to the assembled activists then marched with the rest of us down the center of Broad St., as the people danced in the middle of the street and on top of buses. Then he swept into Symphony Hall and swept the already ecstatic citizens off their feet almost blowing the lid off the double capacity crowd there celebrating Gibson's victory and "black power."

He laid out the grand design of our triumph as the function of his own inspiration and vision! But he was brought to Newark because he had been with Hatcher in Gary, and Stokes in Cleveland.

Part of Jackson's rejoinder to Democratic presidential candidates and like minded media about his popularity being based on "name recognition," was that if he was named Kennedy in Boston or Rockefeller in New York that would be true. But his "being known" was based on marching with Dr. King, long years at fighting racism and economic exploitation, media stunning exploits like the diplomatic coup of getting Syrian president Assad to free black U.S. flyer Goodman, &c. &c. &c. It struck home to most black people as an unassailable truth, whose public declaration was like an incredible punch line!

You mean media attention is great except for Jesse Jackson (black people)? Jackson's life has been hot media copy, the other candidates for the most part were just now being formally introduced to the American public. Jesse had a 20 year head start, he enthusiastically explained, as a public servant. A "workhorse," he likes to say, "for the people"! These were his popular and public and ubiquitously recorded credentials!

The 1970 CAP conference gave Jesse, dashiki, Afro and all, a chance to begin to fine tune the focus of his national and international networking. The conference itself had been formed as a conscious attempt at unifying black political efforts and creating institutions to stabilize and advance the black movement. *Jet* magazine carried prominent photos of Urban League's Whitney Young and Minister Farrakhan, supposedly two opposite poles of black political desire, both speakers at the gathering, in a high five type of unity handshake. Jesse was shown at a press conference with black Canadian militant Brenda Wilkerson & CORE's



Rev. Jackson with Lt. Robert Goodman, the U.S. pilot captured by Syria, whose freedom Jackson helped win, December 1983.

newly ascended chairman, Roy Innis. (That same weekend 4,500 people met in Washington at a convention to draft a new U.S. constitution, called by Huey Newton and the Blk Panther Party.)

But as the civil rights movement, itself constantly assaulted and murdered by white supremacists in the south, gave way by the time of the March on Washington to the Malcolm X galvanized line of Self Determination, Self Respect and Self Defense, anti-western black nationalism, Jackson himself, like the greater part of the black movement, was influenced and even inspired by this nationalism, in one form or another.

The irony of a Milton Coleman exposing Jackson's "Hymie" comments during the '84 campaign is that Coleman was during the 70's editor of the militant PanAfricanist newspaper *African World*. At that time Coleman would have criticized Jackson for not being militant or black enough! However backward such remarks are, it is hilarious that Jackson obviously was talking to Coleman in a language that he thought would still qualify him as a 70's militant, to Coleman, as old comrades of a more nationalist period!

Similarly, Jackson's Farrakhan connection in 1984 is quite natural seen in the context of the post 1970 political united front signified by the Atlanta meeting. Such unity is intensely popular to black people, everywhere, no matter what anybody else wanna think! Howard University students at the National Black Student Conference in Washington in 1987 passed a public resolution before some 2500 students, calling for Jackson to reunite with Farrakhan! Farrakhan had been the inspiration of the conference, Jackson did not appear, though advertised and scheduled to speak.

But there is an obvious contradiction between being a black national leader and President of the United States, to peep present U.S. society! Except that if the just struggle of the African American people for democracy and equality is indeed just, why should there be a contradiction? Must an American president, by definition equal white supremacy?

Jackson's candidacy is important to black people because it is meant to strike at the glittering head of American Hypocrisy. To loudly and with great spirit signify and agitate and reanimate social struggle in America.

At the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana. From left to right: Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher, Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs, Amiri Baraka and Rev. Jesse Jackson.



The fact that candidate Jesse is also Rev. Jesse is in the African American tradition, as late as King, Elijah Muhammed, Malcolm, or Tutu for that matter. There is a powerful and moving historical connection between black politics and religion. Black religion always expresses Black Liberation, however understood!

From the Sorrow Songs, Spirituals, to Gospel or Blues — Rap or Bop or Cool, the culture wants freedom, “Howsom’ever it get here!”

From the 1970 Atlanta conference on, electoral politics grew increasingly more relevant to the black movement, that fact itself a victory of the civil rights movement. The right to *vote* has always been a spearhead of black democratic movements. The degree of opposition to slavery, disenfranchisement, gerrymandering, segregation and discrimination, the holy chorus of black national oppression, are the measure of black development!

The 1972 National Black Political Convention in Hatcher’s Gary, was organized by a coalition of black nationalists and black elected officials and activists. The three person administrative body heading the Gary meeting of some 8000 black people to forge a National Black Political Agenda, was Detroit Congressman, Charles Diggs, then recently elected chairman of the House Committee on Africa, Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary and myself as head of the Congress of African Peoples. But stride for stride, based partially on Hatcher and Jackson’s previous and historical relationship, Jesse was abreast of and able to influence the direction of the leadership.

He was then still advisor to and charismatic leader of many diverse black political forces, able to leap tall racism with a single bound. But he was not a U.S. politician but a black one! Sometimes in that contradiction between popular black activists and electoral politicians Jesse could be “excluded,” by the self organization and self importance of black elected officials. A constant dismissal of black activists by these politicians was that they had no “real” constituencies, because they had not been elected to office, and therefore they were not really important — only gadflies of one sort or another. The Black Congressional Caucus became the freedom shrine of the old civil rights movement in its transition more completely into electoral politics.

There is a photo of the Gary convention (*Jet*) of Hatcher, Diggs and I in front of a podium during a press conference opening Gary. Jesse Jackson, dashikied and Afroed is right at Hatcher’s ear. Jackson called for a black political party at the convention!

In Miami however whirlwinding around the 1972 Democratic convention there, Jackson and a host of black electoral politicians eventually just attempted some privileged connection with the ill fated McGovern campaign. Although there was a National Black Agenda drafted by the thousands at Gary which was supposed to be the voice

of the African American people and black people and progressive people world wide!

The document was supposed to be the negotiating minimum program of the black freedom movement. But the black politicians' real and attempted connection to McGovern at Miami was not based on the Gary agenda but on the personal and class interests of a developing black



Operation PUSH marching in 1981 to demand that Congress extend the Voting Rights Act.

Photo from Operation PUSH

electoral class. And Jesse Jackson struggled even then to lead and negotiate for these elected officials and some resented it.

“Operation PUSH” was a more secular and fundamentally political civil rights organization animated by a middle class oriented, black economic agenda. Through PUSH Jackson took on the major corporations about franchises for black business, affirmative action and employment, pointing out with boycotts and selective buying the power and influence of the black consumer and a black middle class and entrepreneurial class expanded by the civil rights movement. At a

gathering of black Ford Lincoln Mercury dealers in San Francisco a few weeks ago, the dealers testified long and strong about how Jesse had got them their franchises, as they raised money for the presidential campaign.

Dizzy Gillespie, Dick Gregory, Eldridge Cleaver are recent black candidates who have run for U.S. president, at varying levels of political reality. Shirley Chisholm announced before the '72 Democratic convention, but the Black Caucus and visible sector of Black political leadership impolitely rejected and ignored this. Though Ms. Chisholm could have been nominated by the Gary convention, but she sought only to present her candidacy as a base for negotiations with the Democratic and as it turned out Republican party. Her closest aide became a Rockefeller aide right after the election.

Jesse Jackson's emergence as a full blown and the most serious and significant black candidate in '84 could not be surprising to black people or knowledgeable political analysts. It was absolutely in character and an expression of black development and desire. After the recent Bork hearings, one media commentator asked Jackson if he thought white southern politicians had learned anything from the widespread abandonment of Bork by white southern senators with large black

constituencies. "Yes, they learned how to count," Jackson quipped.

One fruit of voter registration and civil rights activism is an enlarged black electorate, constantly growing now that the open terror of southern apartheid has been routed.

As a candidate Jackson's presence is critical to a whole roster of people, most importantly the black majority, if only to raise issues the other candidates would eschew or water down. What is covered with the racist truism of Jackson's "inelectability" is that there are real correspondences and grounds for unity between the black masses and white working people, including farmers and the rural and urban white poor. But Jackson's *blackness* disqualifies him in all kinds of explanations of the efficacy and existence of U.S. white supremacy.

"People say, 'Can you win, Jesse?' I tell them anybody can win who gets the votes! I know *I* can win! If you dont think so, please dont get in my way!"

Yet it was Jackson's presence and stance on the issues that propelled Gary Hart into significance in 1984 as a white "cover" (as in the record business) for black leadership. Hart was like Elvis Presley to Jesse's

Jackson supporters in Iowa on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, 1988.



Big Joe Turner or Fats Domino or Big Mama Thornton. A white commercial cover for black expression!

Hart's abrupt victories in New England were a translation of Jackson's influence. But Hart's "New Ideas" did not exist. Hence his faltering and failure. Even in the present campaign, post-Donna Rice Hart's cry that he speaks for "those who have been left out" reeks for some like a cynical rip off of Jackson's basic stance!

Jesse in describing another of a present (now former) candidate's mutations and about face on the issues, again influenced by Jackson's populist thrust said that, "I told him why dont he start saying 'I am some body'? and take the whole thing!"

In 1984 the media and power centers loudly raged against Jackson's candidacy. The Israeli lobby was among Jackson's most visible critics since they knew Jackson would oppose Israeli Middle East politics and call for better U.S. relations with the Arab world!

Jackson has moved among the international 3rd world leadership since his days with Dr. King. The entire 3rd world "anti imperialist" movement is seen sympathetically by the black majority. Jackson could not speak for the central core and mass of his constituency if he did not support 3rd world liberation and the final destruction of colonialism.

Rev. Jesse Jackson at a 1987 march in Stanford, Calif., honoring Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.



U.S. South African policy is the U.S. rulers' weakest and most vulnerable position. Jesse raised this consistently, leading demonstrations, befriending Tutu and Mandela. His presence among the candidates moved the entire electorate and candidates to the left.

Even the Rightist attempt to split the Democrat's constituency by dividing blacks and Jews did not work as Reagan's people wanted. A majority of U.S. Jews still voted against Reagan and his implied "Christianization of America." Ninety-five percent of the black electorate opposed Reagan. Jesse Jackson's constant exposition on the requirements of black political power educated hundreds of thousands. The fact that there were 11,000,000 unregistered blacks. In many states enough votes to have defeated Reagan, reignited black

voter registration and education drives.

In 84 Jackson's candidacy was made light of by some black elected officials. Old SCLC comrade, Andrew Young, Charles Rangel, Julian Bond were among them. Rangel headed up Mondale's black desk. It meant that there was a split between the black people who thought Jesse's campaign "impractical and symbolic" and others who supported the Jackson campaign. At San Francisco, Andy Young was openly booed and hooted when he served as a Mondale spokesman against Jackson's attempt to get a resolution accepted at the convention opposing the "double primary" held in the south which calls for candidates to win by more than 50%, therefore allowing white voters to unite against the black candidate in run off elections.

The split also reflected a black bourgeoisie still hedging its bet on black Self Determination. One prominent contributor to Jackson's campaign also had his representatives high up in the Mondale organization. And was moreover conveniently absent from the convention "for business reasons."

Ken Gibson gave the "over the top" vote for Mondale, passing on one round of voting, in order to achieve this. But Gibson also supported Abe Beame against Percy Sutton, even though Sutton had come to Newark in 1970 and walked the streets for Gibson!

Jackson's candidacy meant he had to be dealt with by black politicians, even be considered their leader. There had to be resistance to this in some quarters.

But for the 88 campaign most national black political figures are backing Jackson. Including Rangel. Only one black congressperson has announced support for one of the other candidates.

There was a fire to the 84 campaign fanned ironically by American resistance to the idea, but the idea of a black presidential candidate is not frivolous to black Americans! It is another heartfelt declaration of full American citizenship.

In 88 frenzied media opposition has been replaced by a consistent or even inferred disqualification of Jackson by reason of Blackness.

Hart and Biden's abrupt eclipse left only Jackson as a progressive



Zimbabwe Prime Minister Robert Mugabe with Jesse Jackson, 1986.



Rev. Jackson with celebrities supporting his campaign: (from left to right) boxing champion Mike Tyson, Melba Moore and Beverly Johnson.

Democratic candidate. This meant the party was in disarray. Cuomo was baited and coaxed. He apparently will wait to be "unanimously drafted." This "disarray" has even recalled Hart, juicy extra marital stumbling and all, to election center, at least serious since he is still white!

Meanwhile the Republicans rebound from Iran-Contragate, Bork/Ginsberg, Reagan's growing host of indicted and indictable cronies and the Wall St. crash and both Bush and Dole have grown stronger if only in contrast to a black man's being the most popular Democratic candidate.

Clearly in 88, the U.S. is at a cross roads of deep historical significance. Past Reagan to the right, shot from the same guns that wasted both Kennedys and Malcolm X and Martin Luther King is an ominous conservatism that puts one in mind of the Weimar Republic in Germany in the late 20's. The next stop was Hindenburg to Van Papen to the National Socialists!

The media broke the religious demagogues because their "white christianity" was too shrill an attack on cultural and religious pluralism in the U.S. Without at least a cosmetic maintenance of this constitutionally

guaranteed separation of church and state, everything from the Inquisition to Hitler's pogroms can be imagined!

Reagan and the far right's power could be significantly turned around by a Democratic victory. But at the base of progressive social motion in U.S. society is the disposition of African American struggle. Since it is the spearhead of general democratic struggle in the society, from resistance to chattel slavery to the civil rights movement, until today.

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I met Jesse again in San Francisco where he was addressing the Black Lincoln Mercury dealers convention.

Just before we entered the room he was telling me about a convergence of interests that must animate the Rainbow of his progressive and populist campaign. I have seen Jesse Jackson grow with applause and acknowledgement of his accomplishment.

"Do you really feel you can have Phil Benton's job (as head of Lincoln Mercury)? Well, if he *gave* it to you, you might give it back. If you don't believe it, even if you get it, you couldn't. If you don't believe it, don't get in people's way!"

"I was telling Brother Baraka, about the Super people and the Sub people — Got 3/5ths of a human being and then 7/5ths." It is like a history lesson sung — politics, economics. The roar is like recall and future vision.

Jackson believes it is not only white supremacy, but sometimes Black submission or adjustment to it that is in opposition to Black desire. Again and again a theme reappears, "When we begin to behave like giants, other people will begin to make adjustment to us!"

I had left Jesse to speak at the ball. The car dealers were leaping up to go just after Jesse finished. "I gotta go upstairs and change clothes." It was black tie.

My 1st question walking down the hall was how had he changed. He spoke of a confluence of interests. He was leading up to it as we entered so he could speak.

"We can be what we choose to be!!"

He is black people themselves, in this sense, bursting free of white supremacy as well as the sickness it causes those it has deemed "inferior."

His description of the Iowa campaign — his face-off with the "Straight Outs" animates both of us. And the contrasts between Homeboy Jesse bringing word of the struggle, news from the front and the magic of his Iowa confrontation form a cross cultural highway for his concerns.

"White folks been getting 7/5ths since we only 3/5ths. So when we talking about equality, they think they losing something and we think

we're gaining. But Chrysler and Carnegie took those peoples' jobs, not Black people! That's why I talk about the Barracuda Syndrome. Barracuda are color blind. No lights down there — just small fish!

“Truck drivers, auto workers, coal miners, textile workers — who's hurting — nurses, &c. There's a whole new group of people hurting.

“They (the media) try to justify their own racism by painting all white people as irreparably damaged by white supremacy. Why paint all of Georgia like Forsyth County? If there's an Imperiale type person in the state, why paint the whole state like that?

“Can a Black be president, they say? Legally, constitutionally. Yet a few white people want to say white Americans are so terminally damaged by white supremacy they can't function. Herschel Walker lives with his white wife in southern Georgia — nobody said nothing. They tried to stop us from eating and staying where we wanted to before.

On the campaign trail in Bainbridge, Georgia, March 1988.

Photo: Leon Sun



Tried to stop us from buying houses where we wanted to. . . . We won institutional victory. We just raising it up further.

“So we can raise the minimum wage. Get comparable pay for comparable work. Get a National Labor Relations Board interested in improving the conditions and fruit of labor, not strike breaking! We want our youth to move from being attacked by the law to scholarship! We want to revive the War on Poverty. End the Contra-Aid in Angola and Mozambique, as well as in Nicaragua.”

Along with his “Jackson Doctrine”: International Self Determination, Human Rights and Economic Development — he has continued to call for a more coherent U.S. foreign policy.

The basic themes surface repeatedly that he is not only qualified but better qualified than most, and that it is white supremacy sometimes aided by black refusal to think Jesse can win (usually from Establishment Blacks) that are the only obstructions to his winning.

“When we get past the racial ‘norm’ of 7/5ths and 3/5ths, we can’t help but liberate not only ourselves, but everybody else at the same time.” He was laying out the ground to be covered post Civil Rights movement.

“Howard Beach, the subway shooting, are illegal. But that plant closing is *legal!*”

“Good grades are no longer a reason for university scholarships.

“This is legal. It’s *economic violence* we’re trying to deal with. Reaganomics is an ideology, pro-profit, aristocratic and anti-labor!”

We had been close and working together objectively for a long period. Now he wanted to fill me in. Show me as I had asked the track of the cat.

“People in North Carolina lost jobs, lost land. So why not Rosa Parks and Billy Carter (both endorsed Jackson in ’88)? When the lion and the lamb lay together! And they do in time of adversity. If the forest’s on fire, the lions and lambs don’t stay and acid rain pick, they get out of the forest together!

“Monday night in Greenfield, Iowa, not Des Moines, not students but



Rev. Jackson supporting paper workers on strike in Jay, Maine, 1987.

60 and 70 year old white people! ... I want you to see this and write about what's happening in these little farm towns."

It has been good. What is clear is that we are both genuinely glad to see each other. The "interview" has been really two old brothers in arms bringing each other up to date — but Jesse mainly has let me in on the new depth and power, the utter sincerity and correctness of his pursuit.

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Jesse Jackson's victories in the Super Tuesday primaries pageant are a "symbolic" reference to the existence of the African American nation in the Black-belt South.

The five states won approximate the core and outer limits of that nation, so that even in the dregs of U.S. bourgeois democracy, an election yields a referendum-like expression of a national consciousness. Especially because that consciousness (selection) was registered numerically, and as an expression of preference inimical and opposite the majority of Americans.

Latino community greets Rev. Jackson in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Photo: Randy Hughes



Elijah Muhammed, RNA, APP calling for five states, for a Black state, is based on an authentic democratic principle, Self Determination. These five states and the rest of the "Jesse space" in the South could *vote* separation if they wanted to. But the only correct demand is Self Determination. The natural and sacred right of people to determine their lives.

Jesse Jackson's campaign has been masterfully moved and inspirational, especially in its mass expression of Black and progressive political desire. The African American nation spoke Super Tuesday and raised Jackson by the *numbers* into an undeniable importance to the presidential election. This is so powerful because it confirms that Black people are critical to this society's functioning on any level. There is in the Jackson campaign a powerful catalyst for the reigniting and the reawakening of a whole people and a whole movement. A civil rights movement has moved full speed into the Jesse Jackson campaign. The Jackson campaign is this present period's civil rights movement.

The objective Rainbow is an exact physical parallel to The United Front and mass organizations and indeed even the communist party we seek, with the latter its working class leadership that must develop, for it is authentically brought into existence.

The Black Nation is the slave history and present of U.S. society and white supremacy capitalism. Super Tuesday is actually a Black-belt referendum! The political focus of the Black South joined with the Black oppressed nationality in the North who are linked by blood, experience, history and culture, define the major U.S. cities' obvious ideological and political link with the South. The fact that the whole of the African American nation is seen as a lower class speaks to the class nature of the national question. Only the destruction of imperialism can finally resolve it.

The 26 major cities where African Americans are large pluralities or majorities, connected and expanded by a rationalized African American national "state zone" in the South (i.e., the most continuous areas of Black plurality and majority), are a powerful political force in the U.S.



At an Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson rally during the 1984 campaign.



Rev. Jesse Jackson and his family. Standing (left to right): sons Jesse Jr., Yusef and Jonathan. Seated (left to right): daughter Santita, Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson and daughter Jacqueline.

Photo: Norman L. Hunter,
Jet magazine

Black people are 11% of the U.S. population. Jesse Jackson has consistently gotten 10% of the white vote. This 20% challenges the 24% of the population who voted for Reagan.

Progressive forces must support the Jesse Jackson campaign and build the objective Rainbow as a permanent vehicle for progressive community and electoral development. It is silly to talk about revolution and not even be able to elect a school board member!

Revolutionaries would be building mass and cadre structures on the energy and real advance the Jackson campaign can generate! Theoretically it is less complicated to transfer power in a district or ward or city or county or state than the entire U.S. national state. Would that revolutionaries better understand the practical and theoretical advance rainbow structures hooked to the campaign, which could function to elect local candidates even post-presidential election, would be. The progressive aspect of bourgeois democracy must be used to transcend it.

The growing dynamic of Black national consciousness is the call, the spark. It is the measure of the torture of labor in general. The intensified and outrageous "new" super-exploitation the weakening U.S. rulers must utilize to try to keep their coffers full. American workers are being tortured; fired, made to give up historic advances made in revolutionary periods.

The Black worker is the most extreme case, since national oppression, maintained racially, doubles the exploitation, the robbery and denial of rights.

The other oppressed nationalities, Native Americans, Latinos, Asians, experience the same kinds of attack, but class exploitation is fine tuned to maximize oppression by *race* so that the darker the skin, the more oppressed one is likely to be even in the same group. It is the fall of Africa that is being reinforced for ages now by white supremacy, the social philosophy of Western capitalism.

The African American national question and its underlying focus on Black Self Determination cannot be dismissed or hidden for long. Super Tuesday and the Jackson campaign redefined that question and the Black Liberation Movement for the 1990s. □



The 1988 Presidential Election and the Jesse Jackson Candidacy

Mickey Leland
Toney Anaya
Kenneth Blaylock

Soon after the "Super Tuesday" presidential primaries in March, *Forward* spoke with three prominent political figures to get their opinions on the 1988 election and the candidacy of Jesse Jackson. Mickey Leland, Democratic congressperson from Texas and former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus; Toney Anaya, former governor of New Mexico; and Kenneth Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, talked about the importance of this year's presidential race and some of the issues facing the people. Of particular interest is their assessment of Jackson's chances of becoming the Democratic nominee and President of the United States.

Whatever the outcome of the November election, the successes of the Jackson candidacy and the growing evidence of widespread disenchantment with the right-wing domination of the country for the past eight years under Ronald Reagan have already profoundly shaken the political life of the country. It is clear that the people want a change! □

MICKEY LELAND

Mickey Leland, U.S. Representative from Texas' 18th Congressional District encompassing the Houston metropolitan area, co-chaired the Texas Jesse Jackson campaign during the Democratic primaries. Mickey Leland was the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus during the 99th Congress (1985-86).

‘Jesse Jackson has rewritten conventional politics in this country.’

What effect has Jesse Jackson had on U.S. politics? How would you interpret the results of Super Tuesday in Texas and throughout the South?

He's rewritten conventional politics in this country, without question. He has forced the Democratic Party to focus on the reality of where it has to be, if it's going to continue to attract minorities and working people. Family farmers are now listening to Rev. Jackson. People who are disenchanted with the system are listening to Jesse Jackson. He's created a tumultuous challenge for not just the Democratic Party but for American politics altogether.

With the Super Tuesday results, Rev. Jackson now

has a real springboard to victory. I really feel very good that Rev. Jackson is going to go into Atlanta being the strongest candidate, without question.

I'll tell you this, the Democratic Party now has to recognize Rev. Jackson as a real candidate in the race, as opposed to the facade that they tried to create for him. He has redirected the road map for the Democratic Party. Chuck Robb and his gang, the so-called DLC (Democratic Leadership Council), tried to exclude the candidacies, and the seriousness and credibility of candidacies of people like Rev. Jackson. But they had the whole situation backfire on them. (Robb was one of the principal architects of Super Tuesday — ed.) Their heroes didn't come out on top, Gephardt and Gore. Even though Gore scored some points, that's more of an aberration than anything else. Gore is obviously running for vice president.

By creating Super Tuesday, where all these Southern states elect their delegates on the same day, it gives the South a real influence in the process. It also makes Rev. Jackson very, very important, very influential himself, because that is where his real base is.

Last time, Rev. Jackson didn't have a whole lot to hope for. He didn't know very much about what was going to happen in the South. But when he found out what kind of support he would get from the South, he determined that he would run again. He saw the potential of how strong the South could be, how influential in the process it was and would be, particularly with Super Tuesday. So there was a change in the tide in American politics. The Southern primaries now are absolutely the most important indication as to whether or not people will survive beyond Super Tuesday. California and New York are not that important except by sheer numbers. But you know who's got the greatest momentum going into those states after Super Tuesday.

Rev. Jackson's prospects for Atlanta are incredible. He's going with a strong delegation. We have great hopes that he will be the front-runner. We have very high hopes for California and New York.



Mickey Leland.

How has Rev. Jackson continued to maintain and develop his ties in the Black community while substantially broadening his base of support? Could you also contrast Jackson's support in '88 to '84?

Well, he's got me. I supported Walter Mondale in 1984 because of an early commitment that I made. At tremendous sacrifice, I might add. I make no apologies for that because that's behind us now. But Rev. Jackson has for four years been calling on me to make sure that I'm on the straight and narrow with his campaign this time, to the extent that he's entrusted to me the chairmanship of his state campaign in Texas. I am totally devoted and loyal to electing Rev. Jackson as the Democratic nominee first and foremost, and then ultimately as president of the United States. And I truly believe that we have an opportunity this time to do just that. I haven't been smoking anything and I don't believe in using drugs. I honestly believe, as a professional politician, that Rev. Jackson does indeed have the ability to win the Democratic nomination.

Jesse Jackson and Mickey Leland campaigning in Texas.



That's not to say there's not a bunch of racists out there who are going to try to cut him up so badly that they will kill off any chances he might have.

But Rev. Jackson has worked very hard in the Black community to get Black leadership to totally commit themselves to his candidacy. He has been effective in doing that. Willie Brown taking on the leadership of his national campaign is the best possible example of how effective Rev. Jackson has gotten. Even though Bill Cosby, for instance, came out for Rev. Jackson in '84, Bill Cosby is so far out for Rev. Jackson now that it's overwhelming. He makes an appeal that nobody else could make. It is those kinds of things, those factors, that make for a dramatic overture to a broader cross section of people.

With Willie Brown taking on the chairmanship of the campaign, people in his coalition are now listening, taking note, and making contributions and involving themselves as volunteers and so forth. Not only Black people listen to Willie Brown, but white people and Hispanics. The same thing is true with me, I might add. I enjoy tremendously popular support in the Hispanic community as well as in the Asian community. Because I'm involved with Rev. Jackson, there are people in those communities who are now listening. I have interpolated some real support from the coalition that I have built up over time.

Looking back for just a minute, you were involved in the National Black Assembly in the '70s and you've been involved in the Democratic Party in recent years. How do you see Black politics vis-a-vis the Democratic Party today?

I've become a lot more pragmatic about these things. Idealistically, I would like to see Black people leverage themselves, but I think that in Rev. Jackson we have that kind of independence anyway. Rev. Jackson's campaign is not based on Democratic politics, Democratic politics with a big "D." Rev. Jackson's campaign is based on the correctness in his philosophical thrust. He's running as a Democrat, which is convenient because that's where Black people are going to be. It's a prag-

I haven't been smoking anything and I don't believe in using drugs. I honestly believe Rev. Jackson has the ability to win the nomination.

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that tide.

matic approach, sure, but he runs an independent strain of philosophy through the Democratic Party.

I myself have gotten more pragmatic because of the pain and suffering that I have seen amongst the people of this country perpetrated by Ronald Reagan. And for us to suffer four to eight more years of Republicanism in this country is just not something that I can take, as an elected representative of the people. I just see so much human suffering thrust on the American people by Ronald Reagan that we've got to do something to reverse that tide. And the only way we can do that is to win seats in Congress, on both sides, in the House and the Senate. And we need to elect a president who, at least in an overall philosophy of politics, has some sensitivity for the little people, for the have-nots and for the middle class people of our society. And we need someone who would have a great deal of influence. Rev. Jackson would unquestionably have a great deal of influence, hopefully as president of the United States. But looking at the broader scope of things, whatever he does — if he wins, if he loses — he will have tremendous influence in the process. And we cannot throw that away to an independent movement separate and apart from the Democratic and Republican Parties. We've got to deal with the realities of Black people, and the majority are supporting the Democratic Party. That's not to say that we have blind faith in the Democratic Party. We have to continue to challenge internally in the Democratic Party.

Do you feel Rev. Jackson has been successful in reaching out to Latino voters in Texas? To what extent do you think there's a Black/Brown electoral alliance developing around the Jackson campaign?

I think that that Black/Brown alliance is very strong. Rev. Jackson did not get *all* of the Hispanic vote in the primary. There are some strong supporters of Dukakis in the Hispanic community. But I will tell you that Rev. Jackson's support multiplied in the Hispanic community from last time. He has done a lot of work there. There is strong momentum going in his favor.

What also is phenomenal is his appeal to the family farmers in the state of Texas. It's the combination of



Jesse Jackson meeting voters in Texas prior to Super Tuesday. At left is TV-radio personality Casey Kasem.

not only the Hispanic and the Black support, but also the family farmers, the poor white people who are suffering so much, who are now disenchanted with the Republican Party and have not found any heroes. The conservative Democrats are not appealing to their issues and therefore Rev. Jackson, who has spoken on their behalf and has sensitized them about where they ought to be, is winning their support.

What impact has the Jackson campaign had on state and local races in Texas?

We don't have our elected officials up this time. They come up in two years, in 1990, unfortunately. But I will tell you that it's going to set one heck of a precedent for 1990 because what's happened is that, in the process of organizing Rev. Jackson's campaign, there is some great momentum developing. Right here in the city of Houston, for instance, Rev. Jackson has inspired the Black ministers. They're not asking anymore *when* are we going to run a Black for mayor of the city of Houston. But the question now is *who* is going to

run. I think that in 1989 there will be a strong Black candidate for mayor of Houston.

As far as the statewide thing is concerned, there's going to be a tremendous turnover in the statewide elected offices, because Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby is retiring, Gov. Bill Clements is retiring. The land commissioner is expected to run for attorney general, the attorney general is going to run for governor, the state comptroller is going to run for lieutenant governor, the state treasurer's going to run for governor. All those seats are going to be vacated. What you're going to see is minorities rushing to get involved in the primaries, to run for the party's nomination to take those seats. John Hall, a Black man, is developing a coalition very similar to Rev. Jackson's, and is developing some real incentive now to push for a statewide candidacy. So in the minority communities there are young new players inspired by Rev. Jackson who are now very excited about the potentiality and are going to run for statewide offices.

Seattle homeless shelter. The ranks of the homeless have swollen dramatically under seven years of Reaganism.



How is the Jackson candidacy having an impact on the debate over issues and direction of the Democratic Party?

Rev. Jackson has continued his support for real issues, the great issues of our time. He has persevered in raising issues like peace, jobs, justice for all. He's forcing the other candidates to say "me too" in some instances. Many of the other candidates are trying to use their economic philosophies to sort of quell the challenge of Rev. Jackson. "How are we gonna pay for these issues?" They're trying to push forward the idea that they have to deal with budget balancing as the undergirding of our society.

Rev. Jackson continues to push for those ideals that have been conventional for the Democratic Party. But the Democratic Party leadership has resisted promoting those issues this time because they want to be more conservative and paint the face of the Democratic Party fiscal conservatives at the expense of the social programs so helpful to those people who Rev. Jackson appeals to. But Rev. Jackson continues to raise those issues, and the Democratic Party leadership will have to heel. They have to answer those questions realistically. They know that these questions are important to the political base that the Democratic Party has always looked to. The opportunity has expanded now because Rev. Jackson's involvement is appealing to a broader cross section of people in this election. The Democratic Party leadership is now realizing that they can't abandon that base. □

The Democratic Party leadership has resisted promoting conventional Democratic Party ideals because they want to be more conservative. But Jackson continues to raise those issues.

TONEY ANAYA

Toney Anaya, governor of New Mexico from 1983-86, is an adviser to the Jesse Jackson campaign. He currently practices law in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

‘I support Jackson because of his emphasis on jobs, peace and justice.’

Mr. Anaya, you are supporting the presidential candidacy of Rev. Jesse Jackson. Could you tell us why, and why is it that so many Latinos are supporting Rev. Jackson?

First of all, it's because of his stand on the issues. He speaks out on issues of importance to all minorities, particularly Hispanics. I support him very much because of his emphasis on jobs, peace and justice. His position on the issues, whether it is Central America, against English-only, on immigration, his fight against drugs, and others — these are issues that Hispanics know are crucial to them.

Many Hispanics relate to him as an individual who has come up as a minority, who has had his own dif-

ficult times. They appreciate that he can relate to their problems, not just in an academic sense, but because he has lived that life.

Also, many Hispanics are reacting to the same things that many other Americans are reacting to — his charisma, his overall leadership capabilities.

I also want to say that any progress Rev. Jackson makes with his candidacy will make it that much easier for other minorities elected in the future. If he makes it this time around, I think the last major barrier, namely one's ethnic background, will have been knocked down. If he doesn't make it, and particularly if he doesn't make it because there's still this undercurrent of racism, then it proves we've got a long way to go.

What effect do you feel Super Tuesday and the other primaries to date have had on the Jackson campaign?

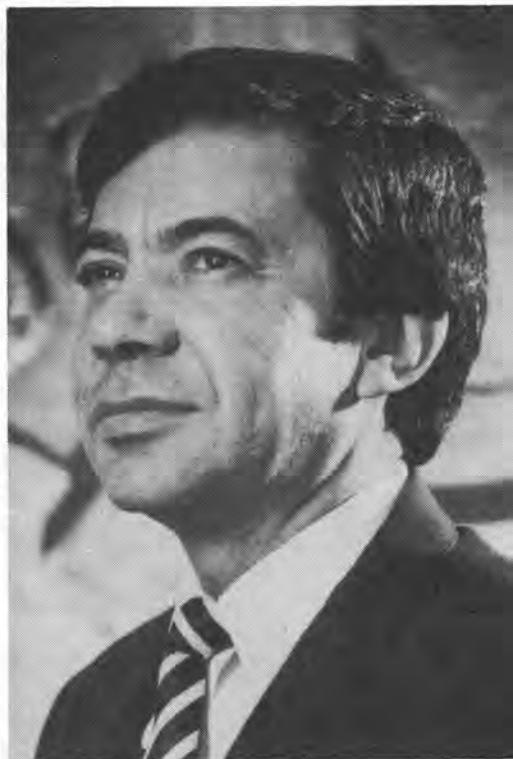
The primaries and caucuses so far have been a tremendous boost to the Jackson campaign and his movement. He now has in raw votes more votes than any other candidate in the race. He's on the verge of leading in the delegate count as well.

How would you compare Texas to New Mexico in terms of their response to Rev. Jackson?

I think the response in Texas generally and among Hispanics specifically has been universal. I think it's the same response we're going to see in New Mexico and California as we move into those primaries. When Jesse Jackson's able to address people directly, he makes immediate converts almost without exception.

What are your projections for the upcoming contests in Colorado, New Mexico and California?

California is going to be targeted very heavily by everyone because of the large number of delegates. Whoever can win that state will take momentum into the



Toney Anaya.

convention. I think Jackson is going to deliver the best message and he's going to have the largest number of volunteers, but he's not going to have the biggest war chest.

New Mexico has the fewest number of delegates of the states left at the end. Colorado has a significant number, but nothing compared to California. But each of these states is going to be a battleground, because every delegate is going to count. Jackson did very well in New Mexico in '84 without the support of anybody in the power structure. He certainly has a lot more support this time.

Has the Jackson candidacy brought about any changes inside the Democratic Party?

His candidacy has forced the Democratic Party to come to grips not only with Jackson but with the growing importance of minorities. Unfortunately, I don't see the national Democratic Party really indicating they understand the changes Jackson is looking for. I don't see that they acknowledge the change he has accomplished, such as the voter registration efforts he undertook in the South. That effort restored the U.S. Senate to the Democratic Party, yet the party has not tried to accommodate the change (i.e., the increasing importance of the Black electorate) that the Southern victories represent.

What significance do the 1988 elections have for Latinos?

The importance of the Hispanic community grows in each election. First of all, our numbers are growing rapidly. Second, we are affected more and more by policies formulated at the national level. As a group, Hispanics have failed to make the kind of progress in this country that other Americans have. In fact, we aren't just looking to future gains, but are trying to regain lost ground. During the past seven years of the Reagan administration, Hispanics have suffered adversely. I think the next occupant of the White House is going to have to face the issue of whether Hispanics are to be permitted to share in political or economic power or whether we are going to continue to be relegated to the bottom rung of the societal ladder.



Toney Anaya with
Jesse Jackson.



Rev. Jesse Jackson meeting Chicano voters in South Texas before Super Tuesday.

What are the critical issues facing the country in '88, particularly for Latinos?

The number one issue is the economy, especially the federal deficit and the international trade imbalance, both of which impact the Hispanic community. The federal deficit continues to be used as a rationale by the Reagan administration to cut domestic programs for the disadvantaged. This affects Hispanics in terms of education, housing, affirmative action.

Foreign policy, particularly the turmoil in Central America, is also of major importance to the Hispanic community. They are not only our neighbors to the south, but we share a common language and culture. Oftentimes, Hispanics in this country find their own close relatives caught up in the turmoil south of the border.

Take Mexico's economic situation for example. If we don't help Mexico in a more progressive and constructive way than in the past, it is going to directly impact the economy here in the U.S. And ultimately those most adversely affected by an economic downturn will be Hispanics.

What do you think about the Hispanic Political Agenda being developed by San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros and many Hispanic organizations throughout the U.S.?

I applaud the effort. The only concern I have is that it is a non-partisan agenda. The only way we are going to affect the political system is to be actively involved on a partisan basis. But I think the effort itself has to be supported because it's the first step in helping to bring about some cohesion in the Hispanic community nationally. Hispanics are not a homogeneous group. We have many diverse views within our community, which makes it more difficult to coalesce politically. I think the national Hispanic Agenda will help accomplish that, but it shouldn't be seen as a panacea or the immediate answer to creating unity.

I think that not until we see a Hispanic make a major push for the presidency or get tabbed for the vice presidency will we see Hispanics rally together nationally. And that's unfortunate, because we can make the difference electorally in key states including Califor-



nia, Texas, Illinois, New York, Florida. Those five states alone have almost 50% of the electoral votes necessary to elect a president.

What are the prospects for the development of the Hispanic political empowerment movement in 1988? Are there particular races or key issues happening in '88 that will affect this movement?

I think that movement will continue to have its successes, very dramatic successes. It's a movement that is very grassroots and locally oriented. Hispanics are being elected to school boards, city councils and so on. We're especially having an impact in getting onto city councils, and to a lesser extent into statewide offices. In 1988 I see us continuing to make significant increases in local elections that will be very helpful statewide and nationally in the long run.

How do you view the efforts, such as those being undertaken in California, to eliminate at-large elections?

One of the keys to the empowerment movement is to knock out at-large elections throughout the country. They've been declared unconstitutional in every court case where they've been challenged, and it's unfortunate that the executive and legislative branches of the government haven't taken the initiative to make changes in this realm.

What do you think were your major accomplishments as governor of New Mexico?

We accomplished a lot of things, but I like to focus on what I call the "four E's": economic development, education, environment and employment opportunities for minorities. In the latter category, for instance, we appointed more women and minorities to cabinet positions, boards and commissions, and judicial appointments than all the other governors who served prior to me put together. Although there has been some slippage already during the current administration, it's going to be impractical if not impossible for future generations to slide back to the levels before I was in office.

Hispanics will continue to make significant increases in local elections that will be very helpful statewide and nationally in the long run.



U.S. troops parachuting into Honduras, March 1988.

With respect to education, we highlighted the importance of tying in education with our economic development efforts. This particularly impacted on minorities in terms of improving educational attainment and the drop-out rates, although obviously we still have a long way to go.

In terms of economic development, we got the state to lessen our dependence upon the oil and gas industries and to start diversifying our economy to adjust to the 20th century, especially in the high-tech area.

In the area of the environment, I am very proud of the progress we made in moving to clean up the air and water, and to begin to create a situation where future generations are going to benefit because of our policies.

Do you think the situation in Central America, especially Reagan's sending U.S. troops to Honduras, will affect the 1988 elections?

I think the Reagan administration has used it for two purposes. I don't think there is a real threat in Honduras from the Sandinistas. Reagan is using the

situation to try to get some additional aid to the contras through Congress. But mostly I think he timed it to coincide with the day the indictments were brought down in the Iran-contra investigation against Oliver North and John Poindexter.

It fits in very much with the way the administration works and what they did when they invaded Grenada. It was to mask over the fact that almost 300 Marines were killed in Lebanon. If the administration is able to manipulate events the way they did with Grenada, then it might be to the Republicans' advantage. On the other hand there's a long time yet before the general election. They might fool the American public for a short period of time, but I don't think they will be able to carry it out till November. □

KENNETH BLAYLOCK

Kenneth Blaylock is national president of the American Federation of Government Employees. He is a senior vice president of the AFL-CIO, and is also a member of the board of the National Rainbow Coalition.

‘Jackson is uniting the poor, workers, seniors, both Black and white.’

What do you think the 1988 elections have in store for the people of the U.S.?

Everybody that knows me thinks I'm too optimistic, but I always believe you can make anything work if you work at it hard enough. I am optimistic about the elections because I see some differences across the country in attitudes of people, no matter who they are. I think they are ready for a change.

What do you mean?

I think they're tired of swallowing lines that aren't so. We are told the economy is doing great, yet we

have seen the number of people below the poverty line move from about six million to over 14 million. We are told that unemployment is the lowest it has been since 1979, yet we know that we've got over 12 million people out there working at minimum wage or just above. People that used to have jobs at \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 and better, now are living off \$7,000 and \$8,000.

We are told there is a safety net out there, but it's got so many holes in it, your Sherman tank can go through them. We're told that we've declared war on drugs, yet we've cut the agencies and the efforts. And our own government is doing business with drug dealers in order to run illegal arms into Central America. They're shipping illegal arms down to Central America in the same planes that they're flying drugs back into this country. We've been paying bribes and doing business with a drug dealer in Panama for years. I think people are saying, "Enough is enough."

Super Tuesday showed that this so-called "political realignment" that conservatives claimed appeared back in the early '80s just is not there. When they asked the independents who voted Republican if they would seriously consider voting for one of the Democratic candidates in the general election, 42% of them said yes. I just think there's a lot of signs that the country is ready for a change and ready to accept reality.

How do you assess the impact of Rev. Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign?

Jesse Jackson is playing a key role in focusing the debate and moving all the Democratic candidates to what the real issues are.

For example, on the economy — that requires an awful lot of interpretation. The interpretation of "healthy economy" in the corporate boardroom is a lot different than the interpretation from a farmer's perspective, or from the underemployed or the unemployed or the seniors trying to live on fixed income. Jackson is talking about people who don't have jobs getting jobs.



Kenneth Blaylock.



Mrs. Jacqueline Jackson, Rev. Jackson's wife, speaking to UAW Local 72 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Local 72 has endorsed Jackson's candidacy.

He's talking about justice and economic justice. People are relating to that.

Jesse's talking about changing government policy. He's simply talking about what government ought to be, what this country ought to be. He's talking about the difference in putting the money up front for Headstart, childcare, child development, and education vs. the taxpayers paying to keep that person in prison nine, ten years down the road. He's talking the difference between jobs and good jobs.

The Reagan administration jumped on this word "family" and put a lot of rhetoric out there. But when you look at the reductions in resources they've taken out of every program that goes to stabilize and insure the success of the American family, they're hypocrites. I just think Jesse is talking in terms that people understand. I don't care what the color of their face is, people are agreeing with him and forcing the whole system to change.

Jesse Jackson is uniting a strong political force of the poor, the workers and seniors, both Black and white.

If you looked around the country on Super Tuesday, Jesse pulled about 10% and better of the white vote. That's an 8% increase over last time. There's no doubt that he's not just pulling the Black vote. He's forcing the institution of American politics to not only listen, but act.

Jesse Jackson's going to be a player all the way into the Democratic Convention. Last time he was shut out. This time he's going to be sitting at the table. He's going to shape the platform, and I don't mean just a platform that means nothing. I think he's going to play a role in making that platform meaningful. He may not be the next president, but he's going to play a key role in who is.

Could you contrast the support Rev. Jackson has gotten from organized labor this year compared to 1984?

In the 1984 elections, Mondale was a clear longtime member of the labor family. We supported Fritz with an historic endorsement even prior to the convention. People went for Mondale, figuring he was the best guy, and we voted together. But this time we didn't try that, because there's a pretty broad field of candidates and all of them are really friends of ours in one way or another. We said, "Hey, get out and do everything you can for the candidate of your choice. Let's make sure we get as many labor delegates in that convention as we can."

A large number of my people, Black and white, are out there working for Jackson. And a large number of people are also out there working for the other candidates, too. But a lot of labor people are out there in the Jackson campaign. They're listening to what the man says and looking beyond the color of his face. So there's a lot stronger labor support for him this time, just like there's a lot of farmer support for him. You look up in Maine where you've got a very small Black population and the man pulled over 30% of the vote.

You know, my own feeling is that if you had another candidate out there who could articulate the issues, and who understood motivating the people, and who went to the people the way Jackson does — if his face

The Reagan administration jumped on this word "family" . . . but when you look at the reductions in food and resources for the family, they're hypocrites.

was white, he'd be rolling across the country politically like Sherman rolled through Georgia.

You come from the South. What's your impression of the impact Rev. Jackson has had on the political climate in the South?

I was in Montgomery, Alabama, when the 1954 bus boycott got started. I remember the times down there when in order to register to vote, you had to appear somewhere on Tuesday night, on February the 29th, at 8:00, downstairs, at somebody's back door. And for a Black person to be able to vote now for a Black man for president, that has to be a good feeling.

Jackson has galvanized people. He's registered some two-and-a-half million people — that many more Americans are now participating in the system. You can look across the South today and see the large numbers of Blacks who hold office in the senates and houses of representatives, and mayors and sheriffs.

Now that doesn't mean we've changed human prejudices. I don't think you can legislate attitudes. But

Jesse Jackson supporting G.E. workers in Cicero, Illinois.



I think when you look at the 10% white vote Jesse is getting across the Southland, that's got to say that attitudes are changing.

During the 1984 elections you were charged with violating the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from participating in electoral politics. How do you think the Hatch Act has affected federal workers' participation in the presidential campaign? I understand the Navy recently ruled that 11,000 workers in Washington state were excluded from participating in the caucuses there.

That's one way it's going to affect how they participate. The Hatch Act is repressive legislation any way you look at it. It restricts people's ability to participate in the political process. People can go to those caucuses, but when it comes time to speak out for the candidate of their choice, they can't do it. We had a lot of people show up at those caucuses with gags in their mouths, just to illustrate to the American public what's going on in this country. It's like what you see in some Central American countries where people are demonstrating with sacks covering their face, because they're afraid if they're seen, they'll be shot. Any time federal workers involve themselves in the political process, they're risking losing their livelihood for themselves and their families.

When you look at the state and local governments with their little "Hatch Acts" and the federal Hatch Act that covers federal and postal workers, you've got six million Americans that can't participate fully in the political process of this country. Until we free those six million Americans to participate in the political process, we can't really say we have a democracy, can we?

We've worked very hard to move a bill through the House, with bipartisan support, that would amend the Hatch Act to allow full political participation for federal employees. It's in the Senate now.

What is your assessment of how the campaign will unfold this fall?

As we move on through the individual party processes and then get down to the Democrat versus the

I don't think you can legislate attitudes. But when you look at the 10% white vote Jesse is getting across the Southland, that's got to say attitudes are changing.



U.S. Steel blast furnaces being blown up after plant shutdown in Youngstown, Ohio.

Republican, I think there's going to be a clear difference between the two in the minds of the voting public. We've had those periods of time when it was awfully difficult to tell the difference between the two. But I think it's going to be a very clear distinction between the values of the candidates this time.

What do you think the sharpest differences will be?

The economy will be a major one. When you talk economy, you're talking about lost jobs and destroyed communities. You're talking about underemployed. You're talking about the working poor. You know it just totally takes apart the old "trickle down" theory.

In the area of foreign policy, are we going to pursue a policy that supports a few rich dictators and tyrannical governments around the world like Marcos or the Shah of Iran? Look at the situation in Korea, where we've lost the support of the people. Or are we going to support a foreign policy directed at really helping these foreign nations and emerging nations develop? I think a big difference will be over the role the inter-

national corporate structure plays in the unfairness going on today.

So you feel that whichever Democrat comes out of the convention will be a friend of labor and in a position to defeat the Republicans?

Well, I don't even like to see it framed that way. When you say a "friend of labor," I think that's where a lot of this stereotyping goes, this stuff about so-called "special interests," and I think it's been used to hurt candidates. I'd like to think that the candidate who comes out of that convention — and the platform — will be a friend of the American *people*.

We've seen eight years now of a government of special interests. There's no doubt that it was for the rich and powerful and the corporate world. A few people got very rich, while a lot of people are hurting in this country today. So I hope that what comes out is an alternative to this.

We have the ability to put a president in the White House that believes in government again, and believes government has a role in our society to bring a little more fairness. It's supposed to be a government of all the people, not just a government for a few of the rich. I think we've got that opportunity and I'm excited about 1989 and our ability to really turn this country around. □

La llave del futuro
es la
Educacion de nuestra
Raza
y la cultura es la
fuerza de nuestra gente



**WE ARE
FIGHTING
FOR OUR
FUTURE**

“English-only” – Right wing’s power of babble

Theresa Montaña and Dennis Vigil

In recent years a new and extremely dangerous political cloud has formed over the American landscape which is threatening to drown this country in a flood of racist hysteria and anti-Chicano-Mexicano, anti-immigrant chauvinism. This storm cloud is the English-only movement, one of the more pernicious offspring of Reaganism.

The English-only movement is seeking to pass a constitutional amendment which would make English the official language of the United States. In 1988,

Participants in April 6, 1987, demonstration in Sacramento, Calif., for educational rights. The sign says, “The key to the future is the education of our Raza, and culture is the strength of our people.”

Theresa Montaña is a bilingual teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District, a member of the Board of the National Rainbow Coalition, Inc., the Los Angeles Coordinator of Latinos for Jesse Jackson, and was a founding member of Coloradans for Language Freedom (CLF) in Denver. **Dennis Vigil** is a bilingual educator in the Boulder Valley (Colorado) School District and chair of the steering committee of CLF.

English-only ballot measures and related issues will be hotly contested and debated in several states, including Colorado, Arizona, New York and Florida, all of which have large non-English-speaking populations. The English-only movement hopes to pass enough English-only bills in state legislatures to pressure Congress into proposing a U.S. constitutional amendment making English the official language.

The main organization advocating English as the official language is "U.S. English." They were formed in 1981 with considerable help from the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), an anti-immigration organization largely responsible for the passage of the Simpson-Rodino law. (U.S. English was formed soon after the debate began about making sweeping changes in U.S. immigration law. Then-Sen. S.I. Hayakawa of California proposed an English-as-official-language amendment to the proposed new immigration bill.) U.S. English claims a membership of 300,000 dues-paying members. They constitute one critical arm and social base for the right wing.

The English-only movement tries to appear innocent and harmless. They claim to want nothing more than official affirmation that English is the primary language of this country. But the fact is that it has caused an increase in racial bigotry and intolerance, and further inflamed the national divisions which tend to separate the people of this country. It has contributed to the racially charged political atmosphere which caused the brutal murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit by white autoworkers in 1982, the shooting death of Rubén Romero for speaking Spanish in Denver in 1986 and the bloody massacre of 23 Chicanos and Mexicanos by an unemployed white laborer in San Ysidro, California, in 1984.

The movement to make English the official language of the United States has indeed generated a tremendous amount of struggle and its success or failure has far-reaching implications for the people. In the final analysis, the English-only movement threatens fundamental rights of non-English-speaking minorities,



Los Angeles. The city is home to the largest non-English-speaking population in the U.S.

including their rights to their language and culture, to freedom of speech and expression, the right to vote and political representation, their right to an equal education, and for the Chicano-Mexicano people, their right to self-determination.

The movement to defeat English-only therefore forms one critical component of the anti-right united front. This movement is largely spearheaded by Chicanos and Latinos, but embraces a broad range of forces including various Asian American nationalities, civil liberties advocates, labor unions, and others. The working class and progressive movements should support this effort, because at its heart is a demand for democracy and for the rights of oppressed peoples. These demands strike deeply at capitalism's suffocating structure of national oppression.

English-only an arm of Reaganism

The modern English-only movement is an outgrowth of Reaganism and is one front in an offensive which includes anti-immigrant laws like Simpson-Rodino, massive cuts in social programs, increased militarization and military aggression abroad, attacks on trade unions and women's rights, coupled with tax breaks and every other kind of legislative and policy break for the large corporations. English-only's ultimate objective is to weaken the Chicano-Mexicano and Latino movements for equality and political power, so that those movements cannot threaten monopoly capitalist superexploitation of Latino peoples, and especially the domination of the Chicano Nation in the Southwest.

The basic philosophy of the English-only movement is that the sole language of the U.S. should be English, and that all nationalities should adopt the dominant Anglo-American culture. In essence this movement demands that all minority nationalities abandon their sense of distinct national culture and pride, and "accept their place" in society, which almost without exception means at the bottom of the socio-economic and political ladder.



English-only and the Simpson-Rodino immigration act are part of an overall offensive against Spanish-speaking and other minority peoples.



The English-only movement is a well-funded attack on minorities.

The avowed aim of the English-only movement is to make English the *official language* of the U.S. (i.e., the only language legally allowed on the job and in public institutions) and to eliminate such things as bilingual education programs and the bilingual voting ballot. Secondly, it hopes to eliminate any form of bilingualism in public services, advertising, non-English-language media, etc. Because of the opposition it has generated, U.S. English has recently tried to soften its public image by hiding its real objectives and claiming that the amendment it seeks would be merely a symbolic gesture.

But U.S. English and the English-only forces generally are far from a harmless and symbolic fringe movement. They are a well-funded political movement, able to mount local, regional and national campaigns. In the space of just a few years, they have helped to spark a series of far-ranging attacks on the language rights of minorities:

- Dade County, Florida — a bilingual ordinance is overturned in the early 1980s.
- Monterey Park, California — English-only measure

passed by City Council in 1986; English-only proponents lead a drive to oust the only Chinese American mayor in the nation.

- 1982 Texas Supreme Court decision allows an employer to fire an employee who spoke Spanish on the job.

- The elimination of the bilingual ballot in Los Angeles County in 1984. Los Angeles is home to the largest non-English-speaking population in the U.S.

- Summer 1987 — a U.S. English subgroup, Learning English Advocates Drive (LEAD), organizes a faction in the United Teachers of Los Angeles, the largest teachers' union in the country. They succeed in passing a referendum which puts the union on record as opposing bilingual education and favoring English Immersion programs.

Who is behind English-only, and why now?

Exactly who is behind the U.S. English organization, and why has it been able to flourish in such a short period of time? What accounts for the specific timing of its efforts?

U.S. English has had somewhat of a "kook" image because it has been fronted by demagogic and eccentric individuals like S.I. Hayakawa nationally, and Stanley Dimond, a retired Army colonel and former Hayakawa aide, in California. However, the organization also gained some measure of legitimacy because its affiliates include notables such as Alistair Cooke, Walter Cronkite, and the "liberal" Gore Vidal (although Vidal has said that "U.S. English is obviously out to get the Hispanics. . . . I would disagree with (that).").

But make no mistake about it, behind the rabid frontmen such as Hayakawa and Dimond stands the cool, deliberative leadership of corporate America. U.S. English had a \$2.5 million budget when it launched its successful 1986 drive to pass an English-only measure in California, its biggest victory thus far.

Linda Chavez is now the national spokesperson for U.S. English. She was selected because of her impeccable right-wing credentials, having been a vocal opponent of affirmative action and expanded civil rights



S.I. Hayakawa, leading advocate of English-only.

while a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in the Reagan administration. But most importantly she was selected because she is Chicano. U.S. English needs a Chicano mouthpiece to spearhead a movement which is fundamentally aimed at that particular community. The U.S. bourgeoisie has targeted Chicanos and Latinos not only because they resist assimilation into the Anglo-American culture; the fundamental reason for this attack is because Chicanos pose a strategic threat to monopoly capitalist control of the southwestern United States.

The answer as to why the English-only movement has picked up so much steam in the last ten years lies in an understanding of some critical demographic and economic changes which have occurred in the United States in the past quarter century. A dramatic shift in the U.S. economic center of gravity has taken place — from the industrial Midwest and Northeast to the Sunbelt, the South and Southwest.

The South is home to 16 million African Americans, and the Southwest is home to a large and fast-growing Chicano-Mexicano population. Of the approximately 23 million Latinos in the U.S., 70% live in the Southwest and California. The growth rate for the Chicano-Mexicano population is 65% compared to a 9% rate for the general population. Forty percent of Chicanos are under the age of 18, and one-quarter are under the age of 12. In other words, the Chicano-Mexicano “baby boom” has not even come close to running its course. And immigration from Mexico and Central America continues to swell the Latino population. It is estimated that by 1990 the Chicano-Mexicano population will number 22 million, and will be upwards of 35 million by the year 2000.

A major part of the U.S. military and high-tech industries, as well as the greater part of its energy and mineral supplies, are in the Southwest. The region also contains lucrative service and agricultural industries. The Southwest shares a 2000-mile border with Mexico, the most important nation in Latin America for U.S. imperialism.



Chicano empowerment struggle is biggest threat

Anglo-American monopoly capitalism has staked much of its long-term future on the Southwest. It simply cannot afford to have the status quo threatened by a "rowdy and out of control" Chicano Movement, especially one which is increasingly demanding political power.

In recent years the movement for Chicano political representation has grown especially strong. Since the Voting Rights Act was amended in 1972 to provide for bilingual ballots, the number of Latino elected officials has doubled, from 1500 to 3000, including the election of Chicano mayors in major Southwest cities such as San Antonio and Denver, and a larger number of Latinos to Congress.

This has given Latinos a greater voice in national policy, such as immigration reform (where the Congressional Hispanic Caucus led the opposition to the Simpson-Mazzoli and Rodino immigration bills), the passage of the 1974 amendment to the Bilingual

Bilingual ballots enable non-English-speaking people to participate in the electoral process.





**The
greatest fear
of English-
only is the
Chicano
Movement
for self-
determination.**

Education Act, as well as in a vast array of regional and local matters from educational policy to the provision of social and city services.

The powers-that-be worry about the profound implications of this movement. Having staked much of their future on developments in the Sunbelt, they want to maintain a strong corporate grip on all levels of political power. The Chicano-Latino empowerment movement threatens to loosen this grip. Greater Chicano-Latino political representation could mean higher corporate taxes, stricter environmental laws, more stringent health and safety legislation, etc., all of which could ultimately affect the glittering profit margins of corporate America.*

But the greatest fear of U.S. English, the English-

*Having more Chicanos elected into government office does not automatically mean any of these changes will occur. Capitalism has often demonstrated its ability to buy off "leaders" of oppressed peoples. However, it is also a fact that nearly all Chicano elected officials are beholden for their power to a mostly poor and oppressed Chicano community. In many cases, these officials must reflect at least some of the progressive sentiments and demands of that community. Beyond this, however, the empowerment movement can open the door for the election of progressive and revolutionary candidates who could fight for more far-reaching changes in government policies.

only movement and the monopoly capitalists is the Chicano Movement for the right to self-determination: for the rights to land and political power in the Southwest. In the final analysis, this is what lies at the heart of the Chicano struggle — to overcome the legacy of conquest and annexation so that the Chicano-Mexicano people can determine the political future of their nation.

The struggle for language rights is a democratic struggle (as is the struggle for the right to self-determination), not a separatist one. It is a struggle to be able to *choose*. The English-only proponents, however, distort the struggle, branding it as inherently separatist. They say as much in one of their “think pieces” entitled “On Creating a Hispanic America: A Nation Within a Nation?” by R.E. Butler; it says, “Hispanic Americans have a fertility rate far greater than the Anglo-American majority. . . . This, combined with the large numbers of illegal Hispanic immigrants and cemented by a common linguistic-cultural tie, could spell trouble for the United States . . . the struggle for an autonomous Hispanic society in the southwest.”

English-only’s fear that Chicanos might win the right to self-determination fuels its deepest and most chauvinist impulse and its fight against the basic language rights of Spanish-speaking peoples.

Why English-only targets bilingual education

Another “threatening” component of the Chicano Movement expressly targeted by the English-only movement is bilingual education. The English-only partisans have constructed a monumental disinformation campaign about bilingual education which has put supporters of those programs on the defensive, and obscured the fundamental question of democracy.

Bilingual/bicultural education was a demand of the Chicano-Latino and Asian American movements of the 1960s. It was a demand for new and creative educational programs for non-English-speaking children, as well as a demand by Chicanos for programs that allowed Chicano and Latino children to learn or retain Spanish.



These programs sought to have children learn English and other academic skills in their native languages, and develop a sense of pride in their own culture.

In Latino barrios across the country, people demanded language maintenance programs for Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Latino children. Originally it was also hoped that bilingual classes would include one-third monolingual English-speaking children, allowing them to experience a broader sense of "American" culture and history.

The first federal bilingual education act was passed in 1968, allowing school districts receiving federal funds to apply for monies for bilingual programs. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols* had ruled that school districts could not discriminate against pupils on the basis of language, that they had to provide the programs necessary to allow non-English-speaking children to get an education equal to that of English-speakers. This ruling set the stage for the research and development of experimental bilingual/bicultural education programs throughout the country. In 1974, due to intense pressure from Puerto Rican communities in New York, Chicanos in Texas, and Cubans in Florida, much of public education became truly "bilingual." Programs were established which attempted to help develop the native idiom of Latino and Asian children. They

were *not* set up to teach children English at the expense of the parent tongue.

Bilingual education challenges educational system

In a very fundamental sense, these programs implicitly challenged some of the basic premises of American education. In the United States the educational system is an institution for social control by Anglo-American monopoly capitalism. The ideology, values, ethics, and cultural dimensions of American education are shaped by capitalism for the purposes of ensuring the maintenance and growth of that system. Thus it is no accident that American education makes heroes of people like Thomas Jefferson, a slaveholder, or Davy



Chicanos established their own bilingual program at a school set up during the 1970 Houston public school boycott.

Photo: Cam Duncan/
450 Years of Chicano History

Crockett, a slavetrader who fought to steal Texas from Mexico, or John D. Rockefeller, who slaughtered nearly a dozen coal miners (including seven Chicanos) in the infamous Ludlow, Colorado, massacre.

This system also teaches most minority children to accept their place in American society. One opponent of bilingual education summarized this philosophy when he said, "If you give them so much education, they (migrant farm workers) won't want to pick crops for a living."

According to progressive sociologist Rolf Kjolseth, "Bilingual education is a demand to tell the truth about U.S. history, to broaden it to include all Americans — Blacks, Chicanos, Asians, etc. For minority children it allows them to feel a component part of society's culture; for whites, it gives them a more balanced and democratic perspective about their history and the collective heritage of the United States. In the final analysis bilingual-bicultural education is a demand to end the 'screening out' process of American education." That is, screening out minority histories, languages and cultures, and screening minority children right out of the school system.

These programs, then, pose a very real threat to the system of national oppression which is such a critical part of the U.S. capitalist structure. They can help foster a heightened sense of national identity and pride, and call into question a system which makes such extravagant claims to democracy and abundance, but which denies the benefits of both to tens of millions of its hardest-working people. For Chicano-Mexicanos, this irony is all the more painful when they become aware that a large part of the Southwest is, after all, their land, a land to which they have had claim for more than 400 years.

Bilingual/bicultural education therefore begins to challenge the basic structure of the educational system, just as the demand for minority studies challenged many of the premises of U.S. higher education. It is not at all surprising then that the English-only movement has made the elimination of bilingual education one of its prime objectives.



The profound confusion of English-only

The English-only movement has raised a confusing hodgepodge of arguments to advance their cause. It is possible however to boil their main arguments down to the following:

First, that bilingualism leads to national disunity, and that only the imposition of a common (English) language and (Anglo-American) culture can unify the country. Second, that Latinos and other non-English-speaking peoples are being kept in "linguistic ghettos," refusing to learn the English language and refusing to assimilate. A third is that education in non-English languages harms the interest of the children involved in such programs. Let's look at each of these arguments.

First, the question of national disunity. This idea has been most vividly expressed by U.S. Sen. Steven Symms of Idaho. Symms was the sponsor of the English-as-the-official-language bill in 1986. Symms has stated, "We have activists in our midst who dream of a separate homeland, Aztlan, in the Southwest United States. Their dreams are fueled by federal and state policies which encourage maintenance of native languages and cultures among those who really desire to join America's mainstream. . . .

English is the language which opens America's doors to opportunity, creates a common bond, and helps to pull us together when times are tough."

Symms' argument is fundamentally wrong. Indeed, the United States is a country deeply divided. On a very basic level it is divided by classes — between a small percentage of multimillionaires and billionaires, and tens of millions of poor and working people. But on another level it is divided by nationality, between whites and minority nationalities. This latter division is not caused by a proliferation of languages, but by national oppression.

What divides America is the social, political, economic and cultural inequality which exists between Anglo-Americans and Chicanos, Latinos, Asians, Blacks and



Migrant farm worker family.
Photo: Paul Fusco/La Causa



others. Chicano median family income is less than two-thirds that of whites, even though Chicano families are much larger. The Chicano high school drop-out rate is more than 50%, five times that of whites. More than 30% of all Chicanos live in poverty, compared to 14% for the U.S. population as a whole. Although the Chicano population is about 18 million, Chicanos have only 3000 elected representatives at all levels of government. This is less than 1% political representation! Add to this the fact that the Chicano-Mexicano language and culture is denigrated and repressed, and you have a bleak portrait of the factors which cause “disunity” between whites and Chicanos.*

The English-only movement has tried to obscure the real causes of national inequality, and to blame the victims for their own fate — for being outside the U.S. political and economic “mainstream.”

*It is also a fact of U.S. life that Spanish is considered a desirable language only where there are small numbers of Latinos. Where Spanish-speakers, such as Chicanos or Puerto Ricans, are a relatively large group, the language is held in considerable contempt.

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But their argument, besides being essentially false, is also illogical. If language is the glue which unifies all the people of the U.S., why isn't there more "unity" between whites and African Americans? In spite of the fact that both whites and African Americans speak the same language, they are divided by a pervasive system of national oppression and inequality. Their common idiom has done nothing to unify peoples separated by racism and national oppression.

On the contrary, it could be correctly stated that what has actually served to unify whites and Blacks and other minorities has been the struggle against national oppression, the struggle for the equality of minority peoples. It is that great struggle which joined the hands of whites and Blacks in the historic civil rights battles, and of whites and Chicanos in support of the United Farm Workers union.

And if there is anything which is creating national disunity at this moment in our history, it is the effort of English-only to deny basic language rights to tens of millions of people in this country. The surest guarantee of national discord, as proven in the U.S. and in other



nations throughout the world, is to try to impose an official language on an oppressed people (Canada, South Africa, India, etc.).

Must people be forced to learn English?

We will now turn to the English-only movement's second argument, about non-English-speaking peoples being kept in "linguistic ghettos," refusing to learn the English language, and refusing to assimilate.

"Linguistic ghettos" are a fictional creation of the English-only mind. The truth of the matter is that most Latinos and Asians want to learn English, not because the language itself is superior or more "unifying," but because it is necessary to function in the U.S. economic system. The objective demands of economic intercourse create a "common language." English is spoken throughout the world, not because of any special merits of the language itself, but because the world economy has been dominated so long by the United States, and Great Britain before that. It therefore becomes necessary to learn English to participate in such a world. Thus coercion is unnecessary to get people to learn English. That is why, in Los Angeles, with the largest non-English-speaking population in the country, more than 40,000 people were turned away from already overcrowded adult English language classes last year. Demand for English classes by Latinos and Asians far exceeds supply.

No law forces people to seek these classes. It is their own recognition that English is the dominant language of the U.S., and the one which is commonly used in economic intercourse. Therefore one should learn English. But the English-only advocates conveniently ignore the facts in order to confuse people, and to create the impression that non-English-speaking people are deliberately segregating themselves from "mainstream America" (and, by implication, plotting against it).

But the real matter at stake is not whether people want to or should learn English. *The question is whether they must give up their own language and culture. It*



English language class in San Francisco Chinatown.

is whether they should be penalized for using a non-English language. The English-only movement says that if you will not learn English, then you should be “punished” by being excluded from the electoral process (no bilingual ballots), from educational opportunity (no bilingual education), and from having equal access to other fundamental democratic and civil rights.

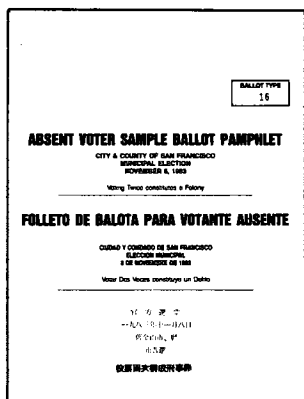
The basic requirements of democracy should be to facilitate the broadest possible participation of the people. We should desire a democracy which is as inclusive as possible. Bilingual ballots, for instance, make it possible for millions more people to participate in the U.S. political process. Since they pay taxes and are directly affected by the decisions made by all levels of government, why shouldn't they have a say in selecting who governs them, and what government policies should be?*

Bilingual ballots are necessary to allow for the fuller political participation of non-English-speaking peoples. The U.S. should not deny any democratic right, including the right to vote, to any people simply because they speak a language other than English. It may be true that all U.S. citizens over 18 have the right to vote. But if it is impossible to exercise that right — by eliminating bilingual ballots, or through literacy tests or poll taxes, for example — then the “right” means nothing.

Assimilation or democracy

As to the question of assimilation, here too English-only is dead wrong. The question for minority peoples in the U.S. has never been whether to assimilate. Rather it has been whether this society would allow for truly equal and voluntary integration, and for the creation of a multinational (and not exclusively Anglo-American) culture. If minority peoples are segregated, it is not by choice but because monopoly capitalism has excluded them from full and equal participation in the economic,

*The English-only movement finally reduces their argument against bilingual ballots to the vulgar question of expense. They argue that bilingual ballots are too costly. But looked at from this angle, democracy itself is a very costly exercise. Why not eliminate absentee ballots? They too are a costly “extravagance” which could be easily eliminated. The reason they are not is because there are many people who want to participate in the electoral process, but who cannot get to a polling booth for legitimate reasons. Most people understand that it is better to have absentee ballots, “costly” though they are, than to exclude some voters from political life.



English-only wants to eliminate bilingual ballots.

Voluntary assimilation must include the right of minorities to retain their language and culture. The U.S. is a heterogeneous society, not simply an Anglo-American one.

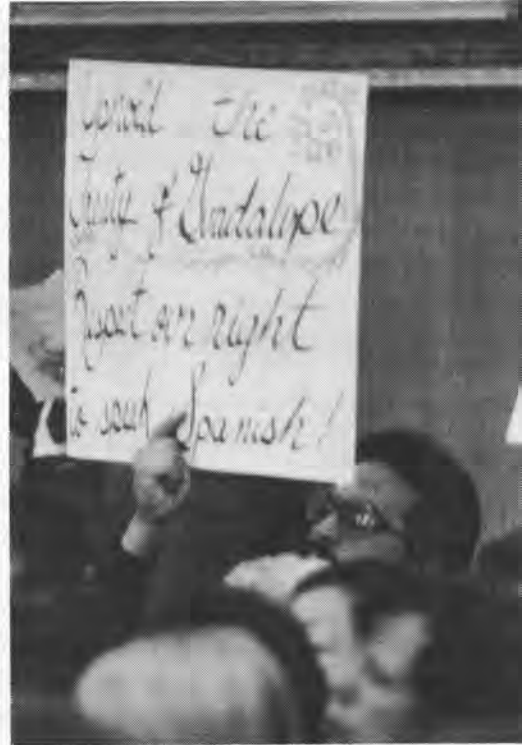
political, social, and cultural life of society. The limits do not include full democratic rights, equal economic opportunity, educational opportunity, and so on. Even if Chicanos tried to completely integrate into the dominant society, they are prevented from doing so by racism, and by myriad laws and customs. The same holds for other oppressed minorities.

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, which concluded the Mexican-American War (through which the U.S. annexed the Southwest), contained democratic guarantees which could have allowed for an integration of Chicanos into the larger society. It contained provisions to protect the land, language, and religious and political rights of the conquered Mexicans living in the Southwest.

But this treaty, like the U.S. treaties with the American Indians, was violated even before the ink was dry. Millions of acres of Chicano lands were stolen, the Spanish language was virtually (and in some states actually) outlawed, Chicanos were excluded from political representation, and were eventually relegated to the lowest socio-economic strata. This systematic (and usually brutal) violation of Chicano rights created the "segregation" which causes so much fear in the English-only movement.

In a truly democratic society, assimilation is voluntary. It includes the right of any minority people to retain their own language and culture and affords them an equitable share of political power. Such a society would in fact recognize that "American" culture itself includes the contributions of all its nationalities, and that it is constantly being enriched and developed by the contributions of all its peoples, as well as by the new contributions of recent immigrants. Assimilation then would mean a recognition that the U.S. is a heterogeneous society, not simply an Anglo-American one.

We can take, for example, a society like Switzerland, where there are four national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansch). This has been the case for several hundred years, and Switzerland has none of the national strife or "linguistic ghettos" so common to the U.S. Switzerland could accurately be characterized



Protest against California English-only ballot measure at a San Jose City Council meeting in 1986.



as a nation where its various nationalities have assimilated. But they have been able to do so because assimilation is voluntary, and accompanied by equality of languages and cultures.

Of course, there are many important differences between the U.S. and Switzerland, not the least of which is the U.S. historical legacy of national oppression. But Switzerland does prove that real assimilation is possible if it is based on democracy, rather than coercion.

Bilingual education makes good sense

Let's now turn to the English-only movement's third argument that education in non-English languages harms the interest of the children involved in these programs. They have unfortunately had at their disposal willing Chicano *vendidos* like Richard Rodriguez, author of *The Hunger for Memory*, who claims that bilingual education (not national oppression) delays English acquisition, segregates Latinos from English-speaking children, and causes them to fall behind their English-speaking peers academically, and eventually, economically.

While one might legitimately question the "solicitous

concern" the English-only movement is showing for our children, their motives in raising this argument are not really important. What is important is that scientific studies prove them wrong. Many studies have shown that bilingual education, in fact, facilitates the acquisition of English, and improves the general educational attainment of children in those programs. According to a 1985 report by the U.S. Department of Education, "Language minority students in bilingual education programs actually learn English faster and better than language minority students placed in English Immersion programs." ("Longitudinal Study of Immersion Programs for Language-Minority Children.")

Key studies have concluded that bilingual maintenance programs produce positive results in language acquisition, language maintenance, and academic growth. According to a report by José E. Vega, bilingual students tested equal to, or better, in reading, language, and math than students who did not participate in such a program.

Other studies on linguistic-minority children in immersion courses have indicated poor performance on tests in English, reading, math, and language art skills. According to a report by James Cummins, associate professor and director of the National Heritage Language Research Unit, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, "When we look at data on the academic achievement of language-minority students, a striking pattern emerges. The groups that tend to experience the most severe underachievement are those that have experienced subjugation and discrimination for several generations, namely Latinos, Native Americans, and African Americans. The same trend emerges in international studies."

The reality is that Anglo-American ethnocentrism permeates the hierarchy of education. This hierarchy has been consistently resistant to the conclusions of many studies proving the efficacy of bilingual education. Studies such as one conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics indicated that both Anglo and Latino children enrolled in a bilingual program scored higher in a readiness test and had better attendance than those in a non-bilingual classroom. This study also showed that Chinese students, while developing language skills in Cantonese, scored above the national norm in

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attainment.**

**Imagine
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English and math. Further, it showed how both English-dominant and Spanish-dominant children in a bilingual class scored higher in English and reading than those enrolled in a "regular" classroom.

Other studies have concluded that children have a higher sense of motivation in a bilingual classroom. In one New York study, bilingual students had better classroom attendance and tended to have a better retention record.

All of this makes logical sense as well. The use of language is imperative to the intellectual development of the child. If a child is forced to "learn" in an unfamiliar language, he or she will, of course, learn very little or nothing at all. Bilingual/bicultural education programs take the fear out of the educational system for the non-English-speaking child. Imagine speaking only Spanish and being asked to learn math, geography, or science in a language with which you are totally unfamiliar. Or being asked to learn in an environment in which your own language and culture are considered decidedly inferior.

One fact which the English-only movement conveniently fails to mention is that English Immersion (the



sink-or-swim method) was standard educational practice until the 1960s, and was considered a *complete and absolute failure* for the non-English-speaking student. The opponents of bilingual/bicultural education have dressed up their recent English Immersion proposals in new clothing (primarily English as a Second Language), but it amounts to the same old tried and disproven method used in this country for more than a century.

What U.S. English and the English-only movement want to do by eliminating bilingual/bicultural education is foreclose the possibility of four million non-English-speaking children (80% of them Spanish-speaking) getting any kind of effective education. And of course, if they are unprepared to compete in a highly technical job market, then they will just have to keep on "picking the crops" for minimum wage and less.

English-only can be beat

As powerful and well-funded as U.S. English and the English-only movement are, they are not invincible. English-only bills have been defeated quite a few times. English-only measures have been defeated in 12 state legislatures, including New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas. In New Mexico, the author of the proposed English-as-official-language legislation ultimately voted against her own bill because of strong public pressure from the Chicano and other progressive communities.

In nearly every case where English-only has been beaten, it has been the result of an effort by a broad alliance of progressive forces. We can learn some valuable lessons from the work of anti-English-only movements in Colorado and California. Coloradans for Language Freedom (CLF), for example, prevented an English-as-official-language bill from getting through the state legislature. In California, a coalition called Californians United fought a more difficult and ultimately losing battle in 1986 against an English-as-official-language ballot measure. We will briefly examine the experience of both coalitions which, though operating under different sets of circumstances, made important contributions to the struggle for language equality.

Coloradans for Language Freedom formed in January 1987, after state legislator Barbara Philips (R-Colorado

Broad alliances of progressive forces have defeated English-only efforts.



Coloradans for Language Freedom demonstration in Denver, January 1988.

**Anti-
English-only
activity is
spreading
across
Colorado.**

Springs) introduced HB-1038 into the state legislature. This bill would have made English the official language of the state, and it spurred an immediate reaction from the Chicano community.

Within two weeks of Philips' announcement, more than 100 people, mostly Chicanos, met to found CLF and develop a strategy to defeat her bill. Chicanos were the core and main base of the CLF with a strong group of parent and teacher grassroots activists who recognized the need to take the initiative out broadly to all sectors of society. Eventually CLF included elected officials, professionals, para-professionals, students and clergy.

The coalition built ties with a wide range of political forces, including U.S. Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder, state Congressmen Phil Hernandez, Tony Hernandez and Dennis Gallagher, Governor Roy Romer, city auditor and prominent Black leader Wellington Webb, and former state Sen. Richard Castro. Ties were also established with Asian American organizations, Native American Indians, Jewish organizations, civil liberties organizations, and Chicano organizations ranging from the League of United Latin American Citizens, to the United

Mexican American Students, to the G.I. Forum, a veterans' organization.

By April, Philips was forced to withdraw her bill. A letter from U.S. English said that HB-1038 was withdrawn because of "overwhelming opposition." Since then U.S. English has pulled out of Colorado, leaving Philips on her own. (She has recently succeeded in a statewide petition drive to get an English-as-official-language measure on the November 1988 ballot.)

Within a short period of time, the CLF generated a whirlwind of activity that forced the generally conservative, rural-dominated legislature to drop Philips' bill like a hot potato. The CLF was the broadest based coalition the state had seen in quite some time, and served to illustrate the leading and galvanizing role that the Chicano Movement can play in developing progressive politics in the Southwest.

Anti-English-only activity, which originated in Denver, is now springing up all over the state, from Greeley in the north to Durango in the south, through a variety of organizations.

While utilizing a variety of tactics, the CLF has emphasized community education through petition drives, training sessions, debates, press conferences and rallies. The CLF has taken active part in education conferences, student conferences, and the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, driving home the message that Chicanos and other non-English-speaking people have a right to their language and culture.

The basic philosophy of CLF was succinctly summarized by Joseph Herrera, a founding member of the CLF, at a rally in September 1987: "We stand for national unity and we firmly believe that the only way to guarantee national unity is for the majority of Colorado's people to stand up and fight for pluralism, cultural progress, language freedom and democratic rights."

The CLF was also able to make effective use of the media, stealing some of the thunder from U.S. English and the English-only forces with a number of well-timed press conferences, and articles and features in the local press. By March 1987, the CLF was



**U.S. English
made
California,
with the
largest
non-English-
speaking
population in
the country,
its main
target.**

recognized as the principal opposition to the English-only movement.*

Of course, not everything went smoothly in building the CLF. It was hamstrung by an almost total lack of funds, resources and staff. There were also varied opinions about the best way to build the struggle, or how to combine different tactics. Questions ranged from whether to focus on "alternative legislation" to English-only, to corporate sponsorship for CLF's work, to the relative emphasis to be put on lobbying work in relation to community education, how much to emphasize the question of language and cultural rights, and so on.

Ultimately, CLF was able to resolve these questions and move forward by recognizing that different sectors of the united front will contribute in different ways. Of course some differences still remain, and others will arise. The main thing is the recognition that they can be resolved as long as the coalition functions on the basis of understanding and mutual respect.

The struggle in Colorado is not yet over, and is facing its most difficult challenges. The English-as-official-language measure on the November 1988 state ballot will be much more difficult to defeat. But as anti-English-only activity expands statewide, it will be in a strong position to meet the challenge.

Harder struggle in California

The struggle in California was much more difficult. In California, U.S. English made an all-out push to get an English-only measure on the state ballot. It spent nearly \$2.5 million, hiring professionals to gather the 600,000 signatures it needed on petitions to qualify the measure (Proposition 63) for the November 1986 election.

Californians United was a statewide coalition which attempted to defeat Proposition 63. It too included a

*In November 1987, a coalition called Colorado Unity was formed at the initiative of state Congressman Phil Hernandez. It was established mainly to build support among upper echelon state Democratic Party leaders, influential Republicans, and prominent leaders from the Jewish and Roman Catholic religions. It has been able to do quite well, gaining the endorsement, for example, of state Attorney General Dwayne Woodard, who attacked the English-only measure as a racist bill. Colorado Unity and the Coloradans for Language Freedom have established a close and cooperative relationship.

wide range of organizations and prominent individuals, from Asian American organizations, to civil liberties organizations, state Sen. Art Torres, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) and many others. Different from the Colorado experience, Californians United did not have strong and broad representation from the Chicano and Latino community.

Californians United was faced with the fact that U.S. English had made California, with the largest non-English-speaking population in the country, its main target. And defeating a ballot measure requires a much more extensive educational and organizational effort than a fight focused in the state legislature.

The Californians United campaign was designed to appeal largely to the existing voter population, which in an off-year election in California largely means older Anglo voters. U.S. English appealed to this group of voters with the message that the demands of non-English-speaking people are somehow threatening, divisive, expensive, and frivolous.

Given the difficulties of winning over this sector of the population, more effort in voter registration needs

Voter registration of minorities is necessary to defeat English-only.

Californians United literature.



Vote No on Proposition 63! ★

to go towards targeting Chicano-Latino and Asian communities. These are the communities most directly affected, and who could be motivated to register and vote if they understood what is truly at stake in this issue. This is an issue close to their hearts because it directly affects them through the possible elimination of bilingual/bicultural education programs, bilingual ballots and bilingual public services. The voter turnout which passed Prop. 63 was the lowest since the 1950s, way below 50%, so a strong voter registration effort among Chicanos and Latinos with this type of political emphasis might have made a difference.

Californians United also researched linguistic questions, bilingual education, the positive impact of bilingual ballots, and others. This information was valuable in debating and exposing the fallacy of the U.S. English leadership. Californians United sent their research results throughout the country, to organizations in every state involved in a struggle against the English-only movement.

Californians United is presently monitoring the effects of Proposition 63, so that people can be alerted to any effort to further erode their rights.

Political lessons from these struggles

The political lessons of these struggles go beyond tactics and specific battles. They include some ideas about the basic political issues involved in the struggle for the equality of languages. Perhaps these can be summarized as follows:

First, that all nationalities have a democratic right to their language and culture. For the Chicano-Mexicano people this means that it is their right to speak Spanish, to utilize

it without sacrificing their right to employment, to political representation, to the vote, or to quality education. If English-only is successful, Chicanos would lose this democratic right and face an even more difficult battle for their right to self-determination.

Chicanos (and other non-English-speaking nationalities) also have a right to maintain and develop their



The preservation and development of Chicano culture is closely tied to the struggle to defend language rights.



culture. Chicanos have helped build the Southwest. They have been there for more than four centuries. They have a highly developed democratic, scientific and artistic tradition. Not only should they be allowed to know and nurture this culture, but all the peoples of this country should know of and benefit from it. (This applies of course to all oppressed nationality peoples. All have a right to equality of language and culture.) The English-only movement would effectively deny this right, and thereby bar millions of people from participating equally in society, and deny the broad general public the benefit of a truly inclusive and democratic cultural heritage.

Secondly, the basic contradiction of the English-only position should be exposed. The very people who claim that their basic intent is to "help people learn English" are the same ones who support Reagan's slashing of the federal educational budget and his pouring of billions of dollars into the military. As has been mentioned previously, making English the official language and eliminating bilingual/bicultural education programs is the worst possible way to get people to learn English.

The English-only movement is opposed to a truly inclusive and democratic cultural heritage.



Research has shown that children more effectively learn a second language, such as English, when they are taught its basic structure, syntax, grammar and vocabulary in their native language. What this proves, in fact, is that English-only's real intent is not to help people learn English, but to maintain and intensify the second class (oppressed) status of Chicanos, Latinos and Asians.

The basic stress in our work should be on the question of democracy, that all peoples are entitled to language rights and to their own culture. The achievement of such rights for Chicanos and others will allow for their fuller participation in all aspects of society, and help to break down the barriers of inequality which cause national disunity.

What should our program be?

The struggle for equality of languages (which includes the struggle for bilingual education) has produced a set of demands which can serve as a basic program for the struggle against the English-only movement. This program could include at least the following:

• *Equality of languages in the U.S.* For Chicano-Mexicanos in the Southwest, that means all legislative, educational, judicial and other governmental institutions must be able to serve the Chicano people in their own language. It means being allowed to use Spanish on the job, and without any restriction in daily life.

• *Bilingual/bicultural programs* which help students maintain and develop their native language and culture, while helping them to learn English. These programs should be provided from kindergarten to 12th grade.

• *Bilingual ballots* should be provided for all non-English-speaking voters. No locality should be allowed to eliminate bilingual ballots.

• *Compensation for bilingual teachers should be increased*, to encourage a greater quantity and a higher quality of such instructors. All bilingual teachers should be required to complete a comprehensive program of minority studies.

• *Educational enrichment programs should be provided* for Chicano and other non-English-speaking minority students.

• *Spanish Immersion programs should be made available* in the schools, to help Chicanos maintain their native language, and to overcome a historical legacy of attempts to suppress the Spanish language. Similar immersion programs should be made available in other languages, such as Chinese and Tagalog.

This program is of course far from complete. It is meant as a suggested starting point for the development of a more comprehensive program and to help stimulate discussion and debate. Such debate is necessary to bring about the greatest clarity, and to develop a program which can eventually unite the broadest numbers of people.

Conclusion

The English-only movement has been on a roll since Ronald Reagan first took office. English-only is a movement which tries to link together the questions of language equality/bilingual education, "illegal" immigration, and the question of foreign policy to try to scare the public into believing that a separatist movement is about to divide the Southwest from the United States. But the language rights movement is not a separatist

**The
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The Chicano and other progressive movements have proven that English-only can be beaten, no matter how hefty their financing and how much support they get from the Reagan administration.

movement. Rather it is a struggle for basic democratic rights.

English-only claims that bilingualism encourages the creation of "linguistic ghettos" into which pour millions of undocumented immigrants, who further stimulate the development of, for example, a distinct Chicano-Mexicano identity. This identity inevitably leads to the desire to separate the Southwest from the United States, and, they maintain, such a desire will inevitably be seized upon by the Soviet Union through their Cuban surrogates, who will help to arm and finance such a movement, ultimately posing a serious threat to the national security of the United States. This is not an exaggeration, but is taken nearly verbatim from the R.E. Butler article referred to earlier.

In the face of this type of rabid, anti-democratic, and certainly racist movement, Chicanos and other non-English-speaking minorities need to build the broadest possible front, with special emphasis on developing the leadership and initiative of the working people.

The Chicano and other progressive movements have proven many times that English-only can be beaten, no matter how hefty their financing and how much official and unofficial support they get from the Reagan administration. There are important lessons to be learned from this for the entire working class and progressive movement. It certainly illustrates the present and potential power of the Chicano Movement and why it is one of the key strategic allies of the working class in its own struggle for emancipation and social progress.

English-only is aimed primarily at undermining and weakening the Chicano Movement for self-determination. But the Chicano Movement is more than a century and a half old. It has undergone many severe trials in its time, including the lynch mob, arson and massacre. It will surely survive the desperate attacks of the English-only crew. And it will inevitably come out of the struggle all the stronger. There is no doubt that the Chicano-Mexicano people are determined to preserve their language and their culture, and to one day win the historical legacy of self-determination which they have earned with their blood, sweat and tears. □

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¡Viva la Onda Chicana!

A personal perspective on Tex-Mex music

Onofre Antonio Abarca

Chicano music has caught the interest of many people throughout the U.S. as a result of the highly successful movie *La Bamba* about the life of Ritchie Valens. It has played a very positive role in promoting more awareness of Chicano culture, especially the music, which has contributed to the richness of music both in the U.S. and Mexico. But Chicano music did not begin just yesterday. It has been around for years, and *La Bamba* is only the tip of the iceberg.

There is a lot of motion and growth in the Chicano music world which is not very well known. Of major importance to the development of Chicano music is the Tex-Mex sound or *conjunto* music, which emerged in the 1940s and '50s and continues to have a major influence on Chicano musicians, including artists like Los Lobos and Linda Ronstadt. In the pages to follow, I want to discuss some of the history of Chicano music, focusing especially on *conjunto* music as it has developed in Texas.

In the area I am from, South Texas, the great majority of the people are Chicanos and Mexicanos. There, *conjunto* music is *the* music. *Conjunto* music is one of the most unique expressions of Chicano music, and remains very popular today. I was born in Corpus Christi and raised in Kingsville, and to me this music is very traditional. It reminds me of when I was a kid, of my grandparents and uncles, the ranches we lived on and dances in the country. It reminds me of the land, and brings me closer to my roots.

Maybe it's that once you get older, you start thinking about what your parents used to sing to you, or about your family get-togethers and the different songs they used to sing like "Solamente Una Vez," "Malagueña," or "La Paloma" — those traditional songs that give you "chicken skin" — goose bumps.

Onofre Antonio Abarca is a Chicano activist, a warehouseman and a lifelong fan of Chicano music.



Ritchie Valens.

What is *conjunto* music?

Conjunto music is the music that comes from the heart of the Chicano nation — along the border regions of the United States, especially Texas. Its roots also extend to Mexico. The sound is commonly known as the Tex-Mex sound or *música norteaña*.

The main instruments used in *conjunto* music are the accordion, the bajo sexto (twelve-string bass guitar), the bass, and drums. Some *conjuntos* will add more instruments, such as saxophones, which give the music a larger sound. This type of

conjunto then becomes a *combo* or an *orquesta*. Today some musicians are adding synthesizers which give the music a whole other dimension.

Conjunto music was shaped by the conditions that Chicanos and Mexicanos faced in their struggle to survive in the U.S. It has always carried a lot of the history of the Chicano/Mexicano people, both through songs like the *corridos*, and through the many musicians who are still closely rooted in our communities. They are keeping alive a tradition that has had to struggle to survive since the U.S. rule over the Southwest began in the 1840s.

The *corridos* go back in our history to that time when the U.S. stole half of Mexico's lands. *Corridos* are songs about important heroes or events in the Chicano struggle. You have "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" which was recorded by Agapito Zúniga and his *conjunto* from Corpus Christi, Texas, way before the movie *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* ever became famous. There are also songs about more recent events like "Los Rinches de Texas" (The Texas Rangers), which is about a strike of melon pickers in Texas in June 1967; and others about the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., and about *migra* raids.

Music has been an important part of the lives of the Chicano people. In this farm worker camp in the 1930s, the guitar is being played by Santiago Jiménez Jr., son of the famous Chicano accordionist.



With new arrangements and new styles of playing, the songs of the 1910 Mexican Revolution and of continuing social protest in the U.S. are still being heard, like "Siete Leguas del Caballo" by Los Fabulosos, "El Corrido de Gabino Barrera" sung by Conjunto Bernal and Roberto Pulido, and "Adelita" by Little Joe. In 1969 Little Joe produced *Arriba*, a typically popular album, but with a political message. In particular, one of its songs, "A la guerra ya me llevan" ("They're taking me off to war"), lashed out at the Viet Nam War.

During the Carter administration, Esteban Jordan's "La Marcha de los Campesinos" helped raise funds for the Texas farm workers when they walked to the capital in Austin, then to Washington, D.C., to protest their working conditions and demand their right to unionize. Jordan is one of the best accordionists right now. Other musicians like Tony de la Rosa, and Valerio Longoria in the 1950s, used to follow the migrant farm workers and cotton pickers from camp to camp. On the weekends hundreds of workers filled the local dance halls.

A few years back when there was a major push to fight world hunger, a parallel campaign was organized in San Antonio called Tejanos for Hunger. Many musicians helped out, like Freddy Fender, Little Joe, Mazz, Laura Canales, Ramón Ayala y Los Bravos del Norte, and others.

The music has also been influenced by other musical traditions which it had contact with, especially in the border region.

An important influence was Black music. When I was growing up, we used to listen to a lot of the blues coming out of radio stations from Louisiana. The influence of Black music can be heard in some of the groups, especially from the San Antonio/Houston area. In groups like Sunny and the Sunliners, or some of the songs by La Mafia from Houston, like "Oh, Girl," it's clear they got that beat and sound from Louisiana. The Louisiana Cajun sound is also present in some *conjunto* music.

There is also a lot of German influence, especially around San Antonio, because of the German immigrants who settled in the area. The accordion and the polka sound were introduced by the Germans, and Chicanos developed it into their own style, in their own way.

As a matter of fact, in a section outside of Houston there's a large German, Bohemian and Czechoslovakian community. A local radio station plays an hour or so of entertainment from those countries in their own languages, and they also play a lot of Tex-Mex music!

Another important influence on *conjunto* music is the country-and-western style, which is strong throughout Texas. This is known as Chicano country music.



Gregorio Cortez, a famous Chicano hero from Texas, stood up to the violence of the Texas Rangers at the turn of the century. "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" celebrated his fight for justice.

Early developers of Chicano music

Several great musicians developed *conjunto* music, whose origins go back to the 1930s. The granddaddies of this music were Narciso Martínez from Reynosa, Mexico; Santiago Jiménez and Valerio Longoria from San Antonio; and Pedro Ayala from the Rio Grande Valley.

Up to that period, the most popular Chicano music form had been singing to the strum of a guitar. The accordion had been used mainly for instrumental music.

But these artists changed the musical tastes of Chicanos. They introduced singing to the sound of the accordion. Martínez used a two-row accordion, playing mainly the treble upper scale, while allowing the bajo sexto to carry the bass sound. Jiménez introduced the contrabass into the *conjunto*, while Longoria in the early 1950s added the drums in a unique way. Longoria was also a singer and he made the bolero and ranchera a permanent part of *conjunto* songs. Pedro Ayala started playing the two-row accordion at age 14, developing a unique musical style.

Lydia Mendoza is another popular artist who began playing around this time and who sang a lot of songs about women. She played the twelve-string guitar and the mandolin and sang *corridos*. She was known throughout Texas and was well respected in the Chicano community. My grandfather never went to the movies — except when Lydia was singing at the theater. Two years ago on Mother's Day, Corpus Christi had a promotional tour for Lydia, who went from house to house to meet the people and play for them.

All these people were very influential, but their music is only now receiving the high level of appreciation it deserves because of the newer groups who are reviving the *norteño* sound.

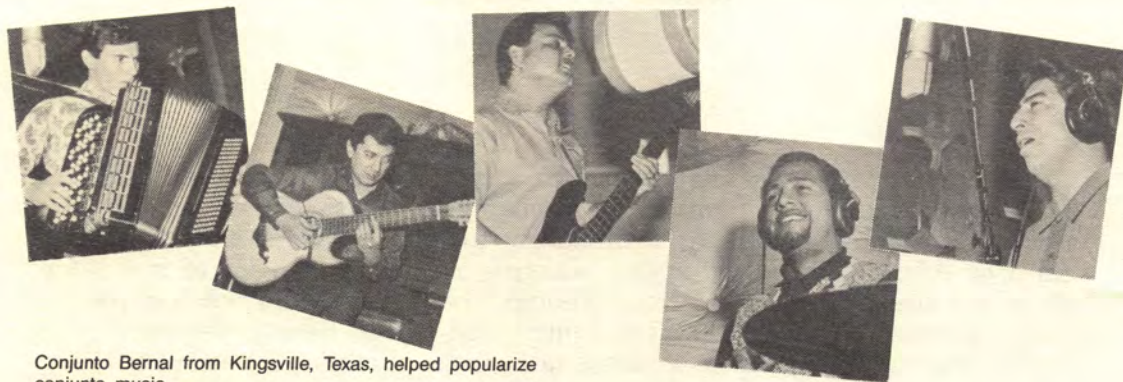
Chicano music moves into the 1940s and '50s

The *orquestas*, or larger ensembles, were also beginning to develop in the '40s and were influenced by the Big Band/swing era. This style enhanced *conjunto* music by giving it a bigger sound. The movie *Zoot Suit* played a lot of the music of the 1940s, which reflected the Chicano community in the Los Angeles area. Raza used to listen a lot to the bebop and the jitterbug sound, as well as big bands like Beto Villa's band. His *orquesta* played some songs in English that were popular, such as "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," in a Chicano style, but also played polkas and boleros.

The *orquesta* style of music was a reflection of and catered to the rising Chicano middle class, yet was still well liked by the working class. Beto Villa was known throughout the Southwest, but also played in places

Lydia Mendoza is one of the most famous Chicana musicians.





Conjunto Bernal from Kingsville, Texas, helped popularize conjunto music.

with growing Chicano populations such as Chicago and Michigan. His style of music is still played by many young Chicano artists in Texas today.

In the '50s, Tony de la Rosa took techniques from each of the great ones and created his own tempo for the polka, the "accordion that never stops," which went well with a new dance raging through South Texas called *El Tacuachito* ("The Possum").

Also in the mid-1950s the innovative Conjunto Bernal was formed in Kingsville, Texas. Paulino Bernal's style was so popular that many of the younger groups today are still trying to imitate him. Instead of using the two- or three-row accordion, he introduced the five-row accordion. And instead of one or two singers which had been the rule, Bernal presented a trio of singers. Bernal brought to *conjunto* music more harmony in the vocals and a more versatile accordion sound. Conjunto Bernal also took *conjunto* music out of the bars — where much of the music had been played — and so created a much greater accessibility and "respectability" for the music than had existed before.

Isidro López from Corpus Christi was another talented musician. His *orquesta* was one of the few in the 1950s that could go to a *conjunto* music place and get a crowd. López, called "El Indio" because he looks Indian, had a lot of influence in promoting the Tex-Mex sound and accordion in the *orquesta* version. His sound inspired Little Joe, Roberto Pulido and others, who to varying degrees have adopted that mix of saxophone and accordion.

So the veterans of *conjunto* music from the 1930s and '40s influenced the young Chicano artists who came up in the fifties, like Tony de la Rosa, Rubén Vela, Isidro López, Paulino Bernal and others. These musicians were very influential and well-known throughout the United States wherever Chicanos lived. They in turn became the inspiration for many players of the '60s, '70s and '80s.

Chicano music in the 1960s and '70s

During the '60s, a lot of Chicanos were re-identifying with their roots. While class distinctions still determined to some extent what people liked, *conjunto* music served as a link between the classes, and between young and old, because it carries a lot of the positive aspects of our traditions and is consistently being enriched by the large Mexicano immigrant population.

In the early 1960s, Isidro López and Sunny and the Sunliners used to team up. Sunny would bring the younger crowd and Isidro the older crowd and the places would be jam-packed, young and old in a swinging, rocking atmosphere of gritos (yells) and taconazos (heel stomping).

The oppressed nationality movements also brought about a lot of change and experimentation, and this was reflected in the music of Chicanos. A lot of different styles developed, reflecting the diversity of classes and communities among Chicanos.

In the 1960s and '70s, the Latin rock sound developed, of which Malo, El Chicano, Azteca and Santana are probably the most well-known. These groups came to be known for their ability to mix jazz, rock and "tropical" (salsa or Afro-Cuban music) styles, which you could hear a lot of in California where these groups were from. Though these groups did not use the *conjunto* sound as much, they too contributed to the Raza community. Carlos Santana is a Mexicano whose father was a mariachi musician. His sound won a lot of respect for Latin music among a wide audience in the U.S. Like Santana, Tito Puente and other Puerto Rican and Latino salsa groups from New York are all fighting to have their music recognized; in this way Latinos are all in the same boat.

Another thing that was happening during the '60s was the "British invasion," which left a new type of rock-and-roll influence in the Chicano community. That influence could be seen in groups from the San Antonio area. They played rock and soul songs of the time, but also mixed in elements from the older musicians, like Isidro López, in their own style to appeal to young people. Chicano groups like Sunny and the Sunliners and Rubén Ramos and the Mexican Revolution began using the organ.

Sam the Sham and the Pharoahs and the Sir Douglas Quintet were two groups which became very popular during this time. But the commercial music industry did not promote them as Chicanos, and these groups played rock in that British style. Many people didn't even know these bands were primarily Chicano until some time later.

The music up to today

From the 1960s up to today, I would say that the main influence on the *conjunto* sound has been Little Joe Hernández. A lot of the newer groups, like Los Lobos, are direct descendants of Little Joe's influence. He's changed with the times and you can see the different moods and changes in his music. The influence of rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western could be seen in the 1960s in his group, Little Joe and the Latinaires. It was one of the first Chicano groups to use the electric guitar as a lead, and to use an electric organ, flute and trombone. For a few years he was



into country music. Now he is moving to a contempo-type music. His style is mostly *orquesta* music, although he uses the accordion in some of his songs. But throughout, he has also continued playing traditional songs. Little Joe is widely known even in Northern Mexico. Some groups from Mexico like Ritmo Siete and Agua Prieta are trying to imitate his style of music.

In the '60s and early '70s, Los Relampagos del Norte, from Mexico, topped the popularity list due to their brilliant mixing of Tex-Mex and Northern Mexico sounds. They, along with some other Mexican groups, became popular in Texas and other areas by recording with Chicano recording companies.

La Mafia is one of these newer groups. They started playing in the late 1970s and early '80s in the Houston area and soon turned professional. They are now well-respected in Texas, and pack every place they go. They are called the Lowrider Band because of their focus on youth.

One night in Houston there were five dances in one part of town. They had Little Joe y Laura Canales; Carlos Guzman, the "Chicano Dean Martin"; and they had La Mafia. La Mafia drew more people even than Little Joe! Five or six of the top Chicano artists playing in one area on the same night! That's what I like about the Tex-Mex audience and bands. If you want to go see them, you can go party and dance. When you go see some of the Chicano groups who sing in English, or rock groups who play in concerts, you pay \$20-30 and all you do is sit. The Tex-Mex groups play in community dance halls and arenas because they are still closely rooted to the people.

El Grupo Mazz from Brownsville is also very influential in parts of Texas, especially with the youth. It is a *combo-orquesta* with about six players. In some of their songs, they use the accordion and saxophone, but mainly they use the synthesizer, as well as rhythm guitar, bass, drums, organ and keyboards. They are bilingual and they sing a lot of rock songs.

Tony de la Rosa is still playing, and he's like fine wine, getting better every day. He's still very influential among the traditional *norteño* musicians.

One of the greatest women singers in the Chicano circuit right now is Laura Canales, who sings mainly traditional songs. She has been given numerous awards — the best female singer in Tejano music, and a couple of years ago she was given the key to the city of San Antonio. Chavela Ortiz,





(Above) Little Joe Hernández. (Below) Sir Douglas Quintet.



(Below) Carlos Santana.



(Below) La Mafia.



from San Jose, California, one of the few female accordionists, is another Chicana singer who is well known.

Los Lobos and *La Bamba*

Los Lobos is one of the most popular groups today that plays *norteño* music as well as rock and roll. They are an example of the artistic diversity of the Chicano people. Their music is influenced by the old musicians from northern Mexico like Los Alegres de Terán and Los Gorriones de Topochico. There is also a definite strain from Valerio Longoria, Tony de la Rosa, and other Tex-Mex groups. Their versions of some rancheras and polkas are a little fast, almost like the tempo used in Mexico.

In their recordings, Los Lobos use new as well as traditional instruments. Playing different musical styles and attracting different kinds of people shows their talent as musicians and helps promote Chicano culture.

Los Lobos' first albums in the late 1970s were very explicitly political, and many of their songs spoke to the conditions of the farm workers' movement. Their promotion of Chicano pride can also be seen in the movie *La Bamba* about Ritchie Valens, which features Los Lobos. Musically, the movie said, "It's alright to play 'English' music, but at the same time don't forget your roots."

We Chicanos in California, or further north from the border, are more likely to lose our language due to the objective conditions of our people in this country. People in Mexico and El Salvador constantly hear American English music, but for us, in the belly of the monster, we have to struggle harder to preserve our musical traditions against cultural imperialism.

Luis Valdez comes out of the struggles of the 1960s via the Teatro Campesino and the United Farm



Los Lobos.

Workers movement. The militancy of the Chicano movement has made it possible for him to play a crucial role in the struggle now to strengthen and promote Chicano music. He has been able to make the contacts to produce *Zoot Suit* and now *La Bamba*.

Luis' brother, Daniel Valdez, is another major figure in Chicano music. A leading singer in his own right, he wrote and composed the music for *Zoot Suit*. For many years he was the music director for Teatro Campesino.

The struggles to promote Chicano pride and identity have had a big influence on Chicano music and musicians. For example, before the Chicano movement days of the 1960s, a lot of people didn't know that singer Vikki Carr was Mexican. She made it in mainstream America before she made it in the Chicano community. But the Chicano movement opened the door for people to understand that being Mexican was something to be proud of, not something to try and forget. So she started trying to make it into the Chicano community, and this actually helped her. She helped the Chicano community by doing benefit concerts for underprivileged Chicano kids in San Antonio. Several years back, after her career in mainstream America began declining, she went to Mexico and recorded a classic called "Total" which became number one in Mexico. This opened the doors for her throughout Latin America. Recently she recorded a duet with Vicente Fernández, a famous Mexican actor and singer, and her musical career is flourishing again, drawing on her own roots.

Linda Ronstadt is another example of a Chicana going back to her roots. She's well known nationally and internationally, but a lot of people didn't know until recently that she's part Chicana. She was in Luis Valdez's television version of *Corridos*, and I could tell that she was singing from her heart. Recently she recorded *Canciones de mi Padre*, an album of songs her father used to sing to her when she was young.

Hopefully people like Los Lobos and Luis Valdez will continue to use



Daniel Valdez and Linda Ronstadt, from the cover of Ronstadt's album *Canciones de mi Padre*.

people who control the music industry, as can be expected, make it seem that Chicano music was "discovered" just yesterday. In the commercial sense, this is somewhat true because racism in this society has prevented Chicanos from getting the breaks. This is especially true for artists with stronger ties to their musical and historical roots in the Southwest and Mexico.

The big music industry in this country — not out of generosity nor out of appreciation of Tex-Mex music — has only recently turned the spotlight on certain Raza artists because they now see a vigorous Chicano/Mexicano market for this music. The recording industry, in particular, has a stake in this. They see the growing Raza population and the potential of making money. So to a certain extent the industry has taken the risk of heightening the Chicano masses' national consciousness by promoting some aspects of Chicano pride.

La Bamba happened at "the right time" and it demonstrated the contributions Chicanos can make to music. It is an example for younger Chicanos who will now head for that crack in the door of the music industry. And they have every right to do so.

But for many it will be an uphill struggle. There are other groups just as good that have a large Chicano following, but have not been able to take advantage of or have not been given the chance to be heard by a wider audience. A lot of what determines where a group is played is in the promotion. In order to get airplay, the promoter will often just advertise a group as a rock group and not mention that it is Chicano. In other cases, groups are known just as "Mexican" and only get promotion in a very limited way.

Because of Valdez and others like him, and due to the growth of a Chicano presence in many areas of the economy and society, the doors to mainstream America have opened a little for some Chicanos, usually only for those that have "connections." These people should continue promoting contemporary and traditional Chicano music because they have the influence to do it. For example, in the movie *Born in East L.A.*, Cheech Marin had Esteban Jordan, one of Texas' most famous Chicano accordionists, play a classic bolero.

We need to remember there are many talented Chicanos who can play any type of music, but the traditional sounds should not be forgotten. I have always thought positively of *conjunto* music. It is music for the people and

their influence to promote the good aspects of our *música*. Hopefully, through this, it will have a greater influence among the Chicano people, not only along the border where it is already popular, but also further away, where there are large concentrations of people of Mexican descent.

The music industry and Chicano music

Chicano music has provided a voice for the Chicano people's struggle to live and survive in the U.S. But the

it is a great part of our culture. Whether it's an "in thing," whether it's part of the Pepsi Generation or not, we cannot let *conjunto* music die.

When I drop my kids off at school, I have the car tape playing these *conjunto* songs real loud. My kids used to say, "Hey, Tata, don't play that old-fashioned music so loud." But now, when they are watching TV, sometimes a song will come on and they'll say, "Hey, Tata, here's that song by so-and-so that you like."

I'd say to people, especially Chicanos, that they should be buying and listening to these records to know more about the music and appreciate the talent that we have in the Chicano community. By doing this and explaining the music to our kids, it will help keep our music alive for the next generation.

It happened to me. When I was a kid, I was going through the same identity hassles. I would say, "In America, I'm an American." But through the influence of my grandparents, uncles, cousins and other *familia*, I kept and strengthened my Chicano identity. And for me and my *familia*, *la música nortea* is what keeps us trucking. ¡Vámonos a zapatear! ¡Viva la música chicana!

□



KCCT in Corpus Christi, Texas, is a popular Tex-Mex station.



EL GRAN GUERRILLERO FRANCISCO VILLA
by Adolfo Quinteros

The curse of Pancho Villa

Helena Amanda Rodriguez
July 1986

Editor's note: The following story by Helena Amanda Rodriguez is based on an event that she was told happened to her grandfather. It was passed down through her family, from her grandfather to her father, who told the story to her. Both her father and grandfather were migrant farm workers in the San Antonio and Corpus Christi areas of Texas. In putting this story into words, the writer has captured part of the rich oral tradition of the Chicano people.



VENTE DIEGO!" Miguel and Ignacio called. "Let's head back home now. It's getting dark!"

Diego looked heavenward as the sinking sun disappeared behind the mountain peaks. But he wasn't ready to head back yet. He and his brothers had been out hunting all afternoon without any luck. Until a few minutes ago, when he spotted a cierva come running from nowhere and disappear into nowhere.

"You're not gonna find that cierva," Ignacio scoffed. "He's probably off in the wilderness now, looking for his supper."

Helena Amanda Rodriguez is a journalism major at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

The mention of supper made big, flabby Miguel's mouth water and his stomach growl. "Speaking of supper, that menudo that mamá has been simmering all morning ought to be ready now."

Ignacio hungrily rubbed his hands together. "Yeah, that menudo is a feast within itself. We don't need a cierva."

"But it can't be too far away!" Diego's eyes fell to the ground and inspected the footprints engraved on the dirt.

"Those aren't his footprints," Ignacio stated. "Those are ours, remember? We only have two feet. The cierva has four."

"No, I'm not talking about those ones. I'm talking about these ones!" Diego pointed to the tracks that circled around a tree.

"Those aren't deer tracks," Miguel replied. "It was probably just a rabbit."

Diego hastily rubbed his foot on the tracks. "I'm telling you, these are HIS tracks!" He insisted.

"No, they're not!"

"Yes they are!" Diego stamped his foot to the ground. His foot hit a sharp object and he started limping up and down. That wasn't dirt but metal he had plowed his foot on.

"Mira, qué es eso?" Ignacio was referring to the metal object Diego had stomped on.

"Maybe it's some kind of treasure," Miguel excitedly induced.

"Well I've got my foot on it. Whatever it is, it's mine!" Diego declared.

Diego scraped the loose dirt aside and pulled up an old rusty rifle.

"Wow!" Ignacio grabbed the rifle from Diego. "This looks pretty old. I wonder how it got here."

"It probably belongs to some bandidos," Miguel suggested.

"Well they must be dead now. This rifle has gotta be over a hundred years old," Ignacio estimated.

Diego wasn't much of a rifleman. He didn't seem to be the least bit interested in it, so he let Miguel and Ignacio fuss over it. His attention focused on the ground he had drawn the rifle from.

He shuffled his foot around the soft dirt. "There's got to be more down there. I bet there's some buried treasure, maybe even gold. . . ."

"Come on, let's go show this to papá," Miguel and Ignacio encouraged.

"Wait, there's more!" Diego stated.

"We can come back for it tomorrow. It's getting dark — "

"Pero it may not be here tomorrow. The bandidos will probably come back tonight, when no one is around, and get the treasure."

"Diego, you're crazy! There's nothing down there!"

"Yes there is!" Diego was confident. "And I'm gonna keep on digging until I find it."

"Well, you might as well dig your own grave while you're at it," Miguel taunted and he and Ignacio started to leave.

"Bring some rope!" Diego hollered. "These seem to be pretty clever bandidos. I'm sure they went down a few feet."

"Bueno, whatever you say . . . " Miguel and Ignacio laughed and they headed homeward.



DIEGO STOOD there in that spot, digging deeper and deeper. It had grown dark now, but Diego wouldn't give up. He followed his strong instincts and kept digging more and more.

He went down at least three feet when he came upon a small tin chest. "Hah! Hah!" Diego excitedly cried. "I found it! I found it! I found the treasure!"

As he was about to open the chest, cold wind suddenly filled the air and he began to shiver. It was then that he began to feel how dark it was. He now felt empty, alone, and frightened.

The wind started wailing as Diego looked up for the first time. A ghost-white image suddenly appeared from above and looked down upon him. The image swayed from side to side, evilly laughing.

Diego tried to scream but nothing came out. He buried his head to escape the horror, and began praying. He was in the middle of his Ave Maria, when he heard his name being called.

“Diego! Diego!”

“No, no, déjame!” Diego screamed, not daring to look up even once. “Déjame!”

“Diego, it’s us!”

He was about to make the sign of the cross, when he looked up and saw Miguel and Ignacio looking down on him.

“What’s wrong with you?” They laughed.

“The bulto? The bulto? Where did it go?” Diego cried.

“Bulto?” They shrugged. “What are you talking about?”

“It was standing right there, right above me just now! I swear, it was a ghost!”

“Man, it’s a good thing papá sent us for you now. This digging is really getting to you.”

“Where did it go? The bulto?” Diego continued, but Miguel and Ignacio didn’t pay any attention. They didn’t have any idea what he was talking about.

“Toma!” Ignacio tossed a rope down to Diego. “Papá told us to bring you some rope before you dig a well and drown yourself.”

“Bueno,” Diego agreed. “Just help me get the treasure.”

“What treasure?”

“Aquí!” Diego showed them the tin chest he had found.

“Holy shit!” Ignacio exclaimed. “You really did find a treasure. Open it up!”

Diego started to shiver again as he recalled his first attempt to open it. That was when the ghost had appeared. He handed it to Ignacio. “Here, you open it!”

“Okay!” Ignacio excitedly began to open the chest.

“Wait!” Diego stopped him. “First make the sign of the cross.”

“Cayate loco!” Ignacio snapped and he slowly opened the chest.

As Ignacio lifted the cover, the wind came back and scattered a stack of letters that had been in the chest.

“There’s no treasure!” Miguel angrily replied. “Just a bunch of stupid letters!”

Ignacio picked up one of the letters from the ground. “But look, these letters have Pancho Villa’s signature. These were Pancho Villa’s letters!” He eagerly shouted.

“But why were they buried?” Miguel asked.

“Help me get the rest of this stuff!” Diego called. “There are some more rifles, and holsters, and a saddle!”

Diego, Ignacio, and Miguel retrieved all of the articles and they took them home for their father to examine.

“These were Pancho Villa’s alright,” their father agreed.

“But why were they buried?” Diego nervously asked.

“That was common back then,” their father explained.

“Soldiers buried their weapons sometimes when they were about to be raided or when they were plotting ambushes.”

“And what about the bulto?”

“That was probably the hot night air and your imagination,” his father answered. “Just eat some menudo. It will clear your mind.”



IT HAD been a long night and everyone was relieved to be snuggled in bed. Diego, particularly had an exhausting day, but he couldn’t sleep. He lay awake in the night trying to understand everything that had happened.

Diego spotted the full moon hanging from his window, and he started to feel the tension of the night. No one was able to sleep. He could hear Miguel and Ignacio tossing and turning. He could hear his papá pacing the house, and mamá sat quietly in the living room. It was like if a silent spell had settled about the house.

The house finally began to be still and everyone was drifting off. Then they were shaken out of their beds by wild screaming and troddling.

“AAAAAaaaayyy-yeah!” A loud cry shook the whole house.

Nobody dared to look out the window, but it sounded like

a stampede. It was the sound of horses galloping, stage-coaches and bandwagons. There were loud gunshots heard and the smell of gunpowder circled the house.



THE CLAMOUR didn't cease until sunrise. As soon as the rooster crowed, the fighting ceased and the horses could no longer be heard. Diego, Ignacio, and Miguel, and their mother sat in the living room, still in shock. No one spoke and no one seemed to breathe. They were weary from the night as they blankly stared at the walls of the room. They were too tired and frightened to sleep.

Their father came in the room with his jacket and his gun. "I'm going out there to see what the hell is going on."

"No, no!" Their mother implored, but their father opened the door and stepped out.

She pulled out her rosary and started mumbling to herself. Diego, Ignacio, and Miguel nervously stared at each other but they didn't say anything. They sat in awesome silence.

After what seemed an eternity, their father finally returned. They all watched him as he walked in the door with a questionable look on his face. He took off his boots and his jacket, and he put away his gun. Then he came and sat next to his wife.

"What happened? What was out there?" She fearfully asked.

"Nada!"

"Nada?"

"That's right, nada!"

"But what do you mean?" Diego sat up. "We heard the gunshots, the screams, the horses!"

"I don't understand," his father remarked. "I know what we heard last night. But I went out there and looked everywhere, and there was nothing. There was no evidence of any shooting, not even the smell of gunpowder . . . "

"I don't believe it. I don't understand . . ." Ignacio and Miguel shook their heads.

"As far as I can see, nothing happened last night!"

"Could someone be playing a joke?" Miguel asked.

"But it can't be!" Diego defensively replied. "Just like the bulto I saw. It was all real!"

"Well . . . this goes beyond my reasoning!" His father remarked.

"Everything is over now, let's just forget it!" Ignacio suggested.

It was obviously on the whole family's mind the rest of the day. But they didn't speak anymore of the past night.



NIGHTTIME CAME again and everyone eagerly retired to their beds.

But out of the distance, the fighting came near their house and a fierce battle outside their walls kept them up all of that night too. They heard the horses, the wagons, the screaming, and the gunshots that filled the air.

It was a long frightful night. But as soon as the rooster crowed, the fighting ceased and everything disappeared.

Again their father went outside the next morning. Diego, Ignacio, and Miguel went with him this time. But again, there was no trace of anything. They returned inside the house, but they couldn't let it go this time. Something was definitely going on and they had to do something about it.

They were all zombies now. So tired and drudged from two sleepless nights. They knew they couldn't go on like this anymore.

Finally Ignacio spoke. "It's the weapons! This all started the night we brought the ammunition here!"

"No, it can't be!" Diego shook his head. He was weary like everyone else, but he adored the rifles. He had even hung one over his bed.

"Yes, it has to be!" Miguel agreed. "They must have some

kind of curse on those things!"

"Sí!" Their father agreed. "It is the curse of Pancho Villa. He buried those weapons and he doesn't want anyone tampering with them." He then turned to Diego. "Maybe this also explains the bulito you saw. Pancho was guarding them."

"You boys better take all of that stuff back," their mother ordered. "Bury it exactly where you found it and shake the dust from your feet before you leave so you don't bring the curse back with you."

"But I don't want to take them back," Diego bickered.

"We have to, please!" Miguel begged. "Or the fighting will continue. We have to let Pancho rest in peace, or he'll never let us rest!"

Diego looked around at his family. Their eyes were heavy. They wearily dragged themselves around like puppets. They struggled and longed for sleep; but no one had slept a wink.

"Bueno!" Diego submitted.

"You better get going now!" his father replied. "It's starting to get dark."



DIEGO, IGNACIO, and Miguel carefully gathered all of the ammunition and carried it to the place they had taken it from. The hole Diego had dug was still uncovered, waiting to be filled and buried again.

Miguel and Ignacio helped Diego place the ammunition and the letters back in the hole. But they weren't aware of the one rifle Diego had stashed under his bed. Diego was very stubborn and he had to hold on to at least one of his findings.

"... This will be just between me and you Pancho," Diego whispered. "I know the guns are treasures to you. But I'm sure you won't mind if I keep one rifle. ..."

The sun was setting just as they finished burying Pancho Villa's treasures. They carefully shook the dust from their

feet like their mother had instructed, and returned home.

Diego and his family were able to enjoy a very calm and sleepful night at last. Although Diego held on to one of the rifles and rehung it over his bed, the curse was lifted and their home was peaceful again. □



on the beach

Alurista

*on the beach chair i
he, thinking across the peaks
slushing, joshing i
but, not really, the snow
b as much his as the sun mine
borge, said i
and he thought, jorgeluís
of course, the hummingbird
sucks on
and the willow weeps
and dylan is bob
even though thomas was
and is
a good poet, he lived off
his agenda, while tomás
has his hawk eye
on the line
the borderline, yes
the grand littleman
el comandante
poeta de la sierra
sandina tierra
i listen
“hablando se entiende
la gente”, true,
so true. premise however
lawned on talking which
implies a two-way arrow
shot
put well, witty
did anybody listen. well
english is now the “official”
language in california
mister, had to legislate it pal
a’nque the flow brook*

cannot be adobed (from *adobe*
building blocks that
construct houses, applesheds
and ovens).
in the southern west
or the western south
as thee may play thy spool
weave cotton so
hermano, compadre
uniformed parodies politik
the world is at hand
like a harpsichord
only the melody waits
tom rhythms blues and crimsons
the light out the cave
b weaponless
i must tell this story
now. least the house of lead
and computers, pencil
ink this sunset well
bring the water up
worry not
suicide is no longer a personal
choice
transnational bargaining chips
chumps chump change
... ¿y nosotros qué?, ¿nos otros qué?
pos nada, nadan adán
papier mache, papel, paper
pauper smashed
has only bridges to sleep
under
stated wealth and property
rights
white maidens writ
título
árbol que vuela vela
hamaca que conoce
el rock más antiguo
¡mécese!

la democracia can only b
in a kellogs cereal
box prize
lotería
malcolm x was the first
víctima
kennedy and king got it
as well, ni modo
el facismo may have had
more tentacles than
any one ever imagined
in germany
in the u.s.a. it matured
since the hiroshima bomb
and its banking
pockets
this is not a critique
in glyph
or in spinach
of olive oil
or whaLE mEAT
future shock chooses
pesticides, agent orange
and, well
weALTH county
here i sit on pismo
hills, libélulas
frolic and he writes memos
funding cowards, no ...
misguided, hungry
lost militaristic egos, he goes
seeding death
and they, unemployed
unschooled
contras follow powder
the smell sweet
the bullet swift
rooster burning there b no dawn
fall choppin lettuce. let us
col, cabbage, garbage haul out
winter nears and the
chinese masses will not starve
he, duck sits, plucking
bleak
pimple heads, tinkerbell
b starwars
yet i ...
... high noon?

*pistoled high plains
drift, draft?
... wish pop eye was here
in the harbor full
moths hover
deceit and deception
prevail as presidential prerogatives
ronny is really peter pan
and nancy wendy
kadaffi captain cook
and the usa never, neverland
wonder how castro
fits in this story
i personally think him
an eewok
who needs fantasy,
sci fi or horror when
the u.s. is enough?
... i know! i got it! the ussr
anathema!*

My Shattered Sister

Naomi Quiñonez

*Sister, I wish to be the waters
of insistent rivers
the long arms of the Colorado
that reach past those man-made borders
to the surging Amazon currents.
Is not your blood my blood
whether coursing through veins
of family I have never met
or spilled on the land
of a continent we share?
My blood is yours,
we are the bleeding twins.
You are the Southern sister
veiled in oppressive shadow
that covers your enigmatic light,
I, the Northern twin,
watch angrily
with fists clenched tight
the cancer that invades
our ancestors' defiled dreams.
Your cries become deafening
as the distance disappears.
Deserts burn,
jungles part silent,
your broken body
appears before me
in a paid advertisement
on the 11 o'clock news
as you break the zombie stupor
of televised distraction.
You are the drumming noise
of my sleepless nights.
The dancing voices of children
become a mother's anguished cries*

*and ricochet off
the prefabricated fortresses
we have so carefully constructed.
You haunt me sister
when I pretend
it could never happen here
or as I turn the pages
and read the countless headlines:
Latino family of 12 living in 2-room shack,
Health care denied campesinos,
Latino unemployment doubles.
Somewhere a warm wind whirls
past our neon-lit hopes,
it is your breath sister
carrying the scent
of ashes and blood
as your voice becomes the river
that connects us.
And we all walk quieter
in the clutches of the North
when we hear the splintered echoes
of America to the South.*

Junk

Ron Baca

*Everyone wants some.
Everyone buys some.
A whole shithouse full
of assholes sell it.
Few own it. Still fewer control it.
Junk.
Death to hybred junk
caste in bronze and wrapped in bullshit formality.
Junk for 5¢, junk
three for a dime
junk on junk
on and on. junk on tv
rapped and packaged
for human consumption
right b4 u i's
& sold at mom & pop
supermarket outpost stations
in the neighborhood.
junk for
sweet things carrying sweet things
company borne of misery
 knee-deep in psycho
 delic funk...minds out of control
lives out of sinc
life on the block
life on the chopping block.
Scared and screaming
disbelieving
dreaming nightmares by the ton.
Hope going up in smoke.
Junk on brothers!
Junk on sisters!
Kick it.
Kick it once,
kick it twice
kick it for all times!*

*The shit can hurt you. bad.
It can crooked you head.
Kick it for all times. Junk,
it'll strangle your love.
rap it in new wave freeze-locked
baggie-tombs and ice it for life.
junk it'll freeze the brain &
stop the heart cold.
Junk. It'll BUST you.
Hear your love's heartbeat?
Listen to your lover's heart beat.
Hear it? It's alive!*

*Do you feel the heartbeats getting stronger?
And smell the junk-stench shit thawing out?
See the junk-toilet backed up at the Potomac
(home of batraygun, king of junkheads,
freak-wigged bagman of all bad dreams)?*

*junk can get more freeky. don't let it.
Raygun's got the corner on junk.
Bonzo breath has got the corner on freak.
King shithead's got the corner on jingo land.
Bagman has got it coming.
got it coming. gonna get you bagman!
bad. it's coming
& bagman's gonna get it. bad.
real bad.*

*junk can get more freeky. don't let it.
Kick it.
Clean house.
Sweep the shit out.
Deal with it like a junkyard dog
deal with it ferociously
uncompromisingly
with dogged determination.
Don't let junk pile up in you house
get rid of it, don't swap it, throw it out.
don't let the shit boggle your mind. workout.
Sweat. workout. work it out.
Purge junk from your mind. Caste it out.
Purge junk. do it. start today.
junk destroys love. don't let it.
junk begets junk
love love.
junk can get more freeky. don't let it.*

New Sun

J. González

(translated from Spanish)

*Their heaven in a thousand pieces cries
in the horizon
lights,
dancing swallows
hum an inspiring song*

*Behind are left the sobs
behind remain the chains
the condemnation
of religious books,
behind.*

*Pyramids of glass toppled,
dressed in bullets
multitudes parade in the plaza
walls crumble
Mariachis play the International
stalks and ears of corn
crest the new sun.*

*Yes,
we swept away the Pentagon
like wind sweeps rain
we cleaned our wounds
in mountain water fresh
our voice unanimous in chorus
sings:*

*“if my blood they ask for
my blood I shall give
for the people of our nation.”*

IF I, IF YOU

Joe Navarro

*Just let me say that
If I were
Dineh and Hopi
And if you tried
To relocate me
If you would try
To remove me forcibly
Off my land
Which has been mine to use
Ever since time began*

*If you through your
Greedy motivation
Would send troops against
Elders and children
. . . without hesitation*

*if you would call me
A criminal, and persecute me
Just because, if I were
Dineh and Hopi
I would do everything in my power
To fight you
ILLEGAL ALIEN
Since FOURTEEN NINETY TWO*

11-28-87

NIGHTPAINTERS

The Dusk of *La Guardia Nacional* of El Salvador

Juan Felipe Herrera

1

They observe the wounds. Only observance is possible here in this daylight. At night, they will refigure with the palette of moonlight, with the turpentine of fever. The brown wound jutting through the shirt, into the air, will become a circling nipple at dusk. Jagged streaks across the neck under the black musk of tropical rain will stream and descend as sweating leaves across the round and hard canyons. The destroyed backbone, the leg and its innumerable endings, the mother's belly scorned with bayonets the child's arms singed in ambush: only ink tracings of the night being etched on cold ground. They observe. They can no longer remember. Only observance is possible. They have forgotten their villages: San Vicente, Aguilares, Sensuntepeque. They want these remembrances; one of them runs and embraces the others, he points to the distant mountains behind them, his delicate hand hesitates he is resolute; it is not his village, no more; it is a gallery of night's work.

2

On the shirt pocket the stain is expanding, slowly, with every village he passes. Perhaps, tonight, the stain will become a gold medal engraved with the symbols of the father. They march and observe as they soften a narrow pathway around the borders of the crop fields; caña shoots above them, covering their eyes, their medals. They annoint the landscape with their thin fingers, drawing in the twilight, over the roofs, here at the mound, facing Las Cabañas, here at the corn harvest surrounding Morazán. They follow these umber maps with boots and enter. You can see them from the hills; the uniforms are too silent as they pause on the side of the municipios.

3

Waiting perched on stones or trees or memories; from here they can see the teams of bees close by, steadfast, pulling new phrases from yellow petals, weaving messages with the last edges of daylight. The uniforms twitch, tear. Their eyes have become as large as the face. The face is one eye pointing heavy iron rifles, aiming. It is time to design the days as wounds, to go into the houses and trembling tents and suddenly scatter the tender chests of unnamed wood, the family letters moist with dreams and summer, miniature altars guarding a shadow underneath the make-shift bed, the boards, the green candle vase screaming with its tongue on fire and through the curtain doors, the dark flight of shrapnel into flesh. Again, to tear the flesh, the moaning flesh of the giantess' mouth opens across the village with the abyss in every stone, calling out and echoing in the black dome of burials growing over the earth.

4

The small band hovers over the body. They gaze at the pool of a bursting wound, unaware that at morning this body will crush them, these little soldiers see wounds only, their eyes have been condemned to remain open forever. That is why at night they will retreat over the horizon and turn back once again and again they will see their valley of wounds; this ominous painting mounting over the gallery of mountains, coming towards them.

No One Speaks of Social Movements Anymore

Margarita Luna Robles

(title from "Edict," a poem by Juan Felipe Herrera)

*The struggles of people of color have faded from the asphalt
vaporized into our pores again
the fist unclenched the chanting throat muffled
barrios/ghettos/chinatown/japantown
searching to soothe the sting
of open wounds still bleeding
still burning*

*There are too many of us, marked inside like the tattoos
on the vato's neck
everyone sees the markings
because they are neonlike flashes lighting
through
our eyes, pupils focused on billy club blood spurts*

*Some of us choose to be complacent only because it
gets the job done
but
many of us have spent too much time out in the streets
to forget the taste of wild game
and the freedom that comes with it*

*Everything changes
and still there are blood markings above
the door frame to my home*

*Keep moving look to the colors of the sunset
listen to the internal beat and dance so that
the hot sidewalk doesn't scald your feet
and ground your flight*

*Justice is looking for its definition
you see, it is about movement*

Poets

Alurista is a Chicano poet and author, highly acclaimed in the U.S. and internationally, and West Coast editor of three literary and academic journals. He has published seven poetry collections with another on the way, and is assistant professor of Spanish at Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo, California.

Naomi Quiñonez is a Los Angeles-based poet and director of the LAMP Literacy Project in Monterey Park, California.

Ron Baca is a Chicano activist/poet who resides in Los Angeles.

J. González is a poet/activist from San Jose, California.

Joe Navarro is a Chicano activist in Denver and a member of MEChA, a Chicano student organization.

Juan Felipe Herrera is a Chicano solar marimba player residing in San Jose, California.

Margarita Luna Robles is a writer, poet and performer from San Jose. She is coordinator of California Poets for the Schools for Santa Clara County, California.

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