

A MARXIST NEWSLETTER

Forward Motion Forward Motion Forward Motion

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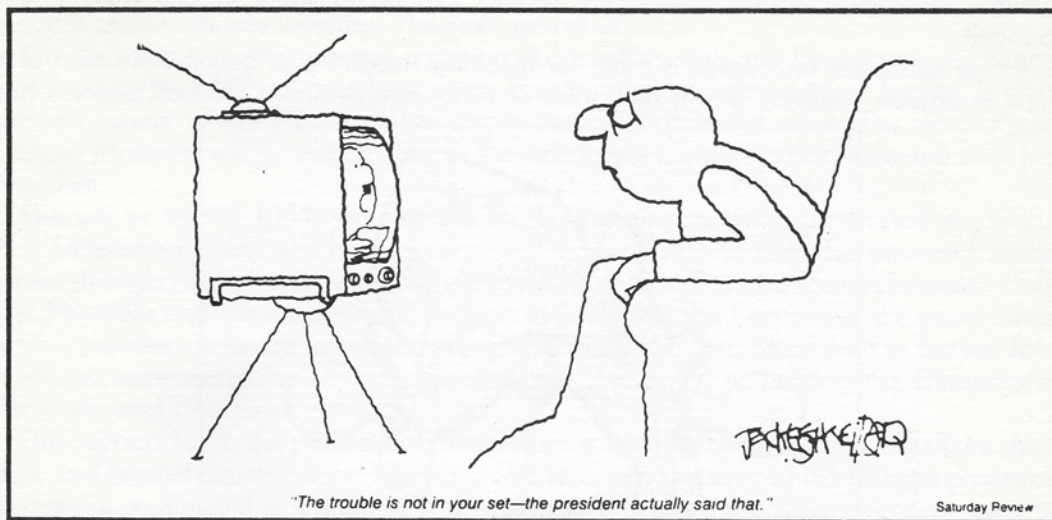
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Editorial

Once again the Republicans are chanting "Four More Years!" And from where we sit now, it doesn't look like the Democrats can stop them. This means four more years of aggressive nationalism and militarism, of social spending cuts and regressive tax reform, of erosion of social equality and women's rights, of business deregulation and anti-unionism. Of course, the slogan is mainly for four more years of Reagan himself, and some polls suggest there is less enthusiasm for his specific program. The irony of the situation is that the Democratic Party offers much the same. Whether it's bobbing and

weaving on Central America or the freeze, insisting that tax increases will reduce the budget and not restore social spending, or crowding out the Rainbow, the Democrats have made clear their own conservatism.

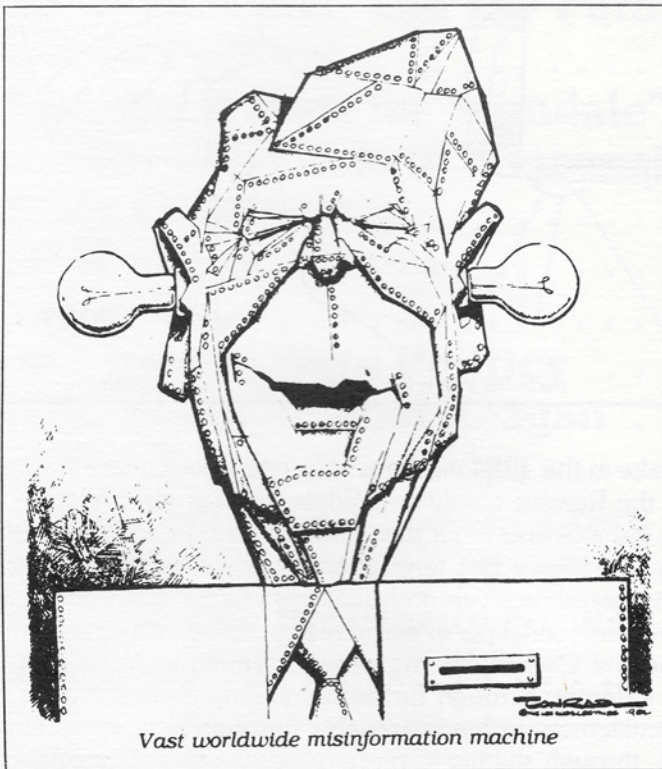


So what is at stake in the 1984 elections? On one side stands the Republican intent to make permanent the Reagan revolution. While nothing can undo the invasion of Grenada or erase the lost jobs and other pain and suffering Reaganism wrought since 1981, much of the administration's first term changes could be just as easily reversed. For example, while the spending levels and qualifications for many social welfare programs have changed, the basic concepts of social responsibility and entitlement, going back to the New Deal and the Civil Rights movement, remain in place. But the second time around could be different: through further remodeling a conservative Supreme Court, through limiting entitlement to funds available (through a balanced budget amendment and tax indexing), through shifting to more regressive taxes like consumption or "value added" taxes, through full-scale counter-revolution in Central America, and other right-wing ideas in the offing.

Already, the terms of political debate have shifted. Liberalism is no longer as mainstream as it used to be. Issues are once again fought out in whats-good-for-business, whats-good-for-America, whats-good-for-me, and whats-right-with-god terms. This is not liable to change again for some time. The key social base of liberal capitalist policy in the United States—organized labor—has been disorganized and demoralized. It is hard to take heart, as AFL-CIO leaders reportedly did, from polling results showing Mondale leading Reagan by 50 to 38 percent among union members in August (NYT, 8/20/84). That 38% of union members support Reagan, with even stronger pro-Reagan sentiment

among working people as a whole, says much for the triumph of conservative ideology today. The Wallacite right-wing populism of the 60's has been recast into a more polished, legitimate current among white workers North and South. This has been one of two key, interrelated strategic elements for the Republicans, with the other being a more general ideological appeal among the rapidly expanding white middle class in the Sunbelt.

These successes encourage a more far-reaching Reagan goal yet: the creation of a new bourgeois coalition. From this point of view, Reaganomics' political success has



been more important than its economic short-sightedness. Reagan's perspective seems to be to give corporate America every advantage, every benefit, every break imaginable in the hopes this will somehow, someday be sufficient for it to master the new economic realities. This has apparently governed Reagan's picking and choosing among the more radical right's economic programs. For big business, this approach is bound to be a preferable first choice over the stepped-up social regulation—however timid—the Democrats propose. But few observers doubt that severe economic contradictions lie ahead for U.S. capitalism—the debt and the cost of Reagan's military buildup, the continuing imperial decline despite this buildup, international competition, erosion of the skilled job base, and other factors.

In the short term, at least, the combination of economic strain and a barely disguised pro-big business orientation promises increasing polarization of U.S. society. Wide segments of the people are slipping into a permanent underclass, excluded from the shrinking industrial job base, relegated to a low wage service sector, and unprotected and unassisted by government programs. Protection instead goes to corporate profits and the income of the already wealthy. The rich get richer . . .

On the other side of this grand equation sit, or rather slink, the Democrats. A Democratic victory in 1984 will purchase some breathing space against these trends. It may prevent repeal of the New Deal or carpet bombing of El Salvador. The next phase Reagan promises will be put off. So, as the saying goes, we hold our nose and vote for Mondale . . .

But win or lose in 1984, the Republican Right is already better positioned for 1988. The Democratic Party will have a very hard time rallying to stop the powerful social forces strongly in motion in favor of the conservative tide. The non-debate between Hart and Mondale and the exclusion of Jackson indicate that the Democrats are years away from a popular challenge to conservatism and Republicanism. More than in the last few elections, supporting the Democratic nominee is a matter of helping the Democratic Party win and little more.

But beyond 1984, the polarization Reaganism is bringing helps frame some of the strategic and tactical debate on the left today. We look for resistance to the Reagan program to develop in a way that it did not over the last four years. If the Right oversteps itself, it may give social justice a good name again. In the absence of long-term economic growth, a labor- and citizen-oriented democratic economics will gain ground. Some on the left see the right-led polarization of society leaving the Democrats behind, or at least in the middle. In this view, the prospects for electoral consolidation in some kind of leftward direction are growing. Polarization is drawing new voters to the polls while breaking old bonds to the Democrats, especially but not just among Black and Latino voters, reflecting revival of these movements. Jesse Jackson's success, and the local campaigns it drew on, are the strongest arguments for this perspective. Whether such campaigns are formally inside the Democratic Party today or not, their political independence is a trend we can defend and nourish eventually to the point of standing clear of the Democrats. Others among us do not see this radicalization. Polarization is occurring at a mass level, with popular discontent in some quarters more than matched by popular conservatism elsewhere—not a favorable time for convincing progressives to abandon whatever fragile defense Democratic Party mechanisms provide. Recent developments do make clearer the dimensions of the strategic task of building a socialist movement here—in particular, the tenacious persistence and recurrence of white supremacist divisions among working people. In this view, while elections are a critical vehicle for organizing against Reaganism, they are only one among a number of beginning points for a new grass roots activism we need to master in the 1980s and '90s.

This debate and others like it can best be had in the context of evaluation of continuing work. We offer this election issue of *Forward Motion* toward that end.

Reagan, the Democrats, and the Future of Rainbow Politics

The following article summarizes a roundtable discussion of some PUL members following the Democratic convention.

FM: How important is it to beat Reagan in 1984?

ST: It's very important. That's the key issue. But I also think it's important that we don't brush over how weak the Democratic Party program really is. Although the Democrats make a big show of their call back to New Deal liberalism—attacking Reagan for being unfair and biased towards the rich—there is little programmatic to back this image up. They have taken as the lesson of their 1980 defeat that the Democrats need to focus on the issues that won the Republicans such popularity: family values, budget deficits, religion. They've moved even further to the middle of the road and are basing their campaign on a basically middle class appeal. It's not even a slightly radical campaign.

LN: What I worry about in supporting the Democratic Party ticket is that we would be losing the opportunity to struggle for issues of equal opportunity and multi-national unity. Even though the Democratic leadership was forced to recognize Jesse Jackson, his positions were almost entirely scuttled. None of his platform resolutions got through except for a very weak version of affirmative action support. I wonder if supporting the Democrats now is actually strengthening the hand of the Dixiecrats. So I see two separate questions: first, how critical is it to defeat Reagan? But the other question is, in what direction is this election campaign taking the Democratic Party—forward or backward?

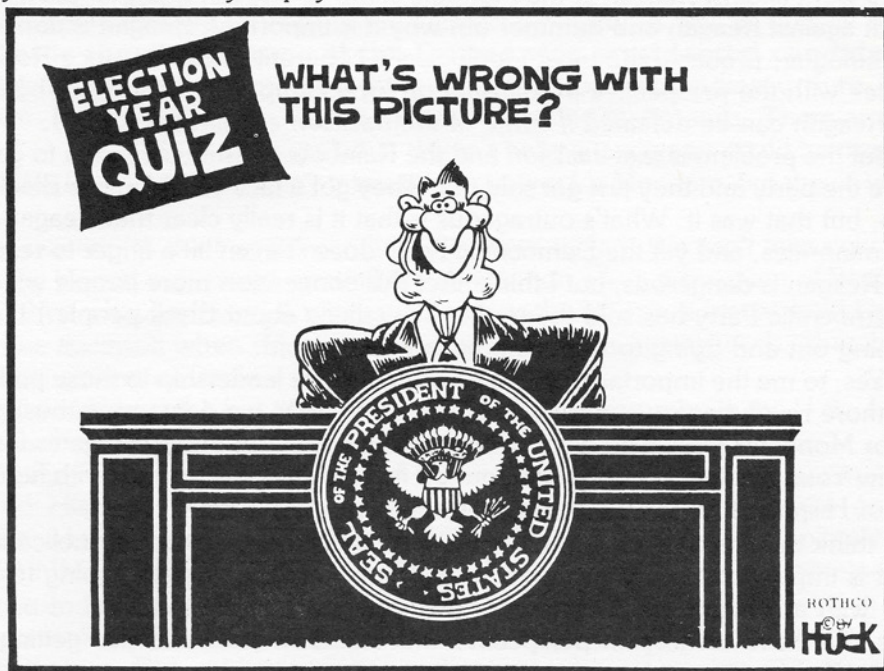
NM: I agree that we can't vote for the Democratic Party on the grounds that it has made any major concessions to the Jackson campaign. It really struck me watching the convention on TV that even though there was a Black presence, the convention was internally segregated. There was no move by the white politicians to unite the party. They basically let Jackson speak and clapped politely, but that was it. They didn't make any overtures to unite around issues that would reach out to the Black community. Overall the Democrats' positions were pretty bad. On Israel they were terrible. On the budget maybe they were somewhat better. Defense was the only place where there might be a clear programmatic difference with the Republicans.

MM: Practically, the Supreme Court appointments are something to think about. And, also, Mondale has promised to fire the Civil Rights Commission appointments Reagan made. Those things might be important.

BF: We'd have to say clearly that there's nothing great that the Democratic Party has to offer us. I don't see being put in a position of having to defend it. The point is to vote

out Reagan. We can argue on the basis of the Supreme Court issue, foreign policy, and just getting some breathing space.

NM: Something like the slogan "DUMP REAGAN" isn't bad. And the fact is, the only alternative is Mondale. I don't think this precludes talking about why the Democratic Party hasn't been able to mobilize a strong response; how it doesn't really provide an alternative. I still think we can agitate for a socialist view on what to do, like saying directly that the best way to pay off the deficit is to tax the rich.



ST: Yes, I think we can show the Democrats sold progressives out and that as long as there are only a Democratic and Republican Party this will always happen. We need other parties. But there are no other alternatives in 1984. It's the old choice of the lesser of two evils and this time we have to make it. We have to defeat Reagan to make inroads in defeating the Right wing. Or at least set it back for a while. Because if Reagan gets back in office it will definitely strengthen the Right wing.

FM: People here have generally agreed on the importance of getting Reagan out. At the same time, many of you have also spoken to major weaknesses of the Democratic Party. How should we weigh these things in deciding if and how to participate in the Democratic campaign effort? And what does all this mean for the future of Rainbow politics?

ST: I'd say we have to support Mondale. But I'm not at all sure that means going into the campaign as a group. Maybe it means focusing more on the Ferraro candidacy or on local stuff. I don't think the Jackson machine is going to go all out and organize for

Mondale; neither should we. Also, I should say I think it's almost impossible to beat Reagan in 1984.

BF: Other Left groups have spent a whole lot of time in the thick of Democratic Party politics. Some of them are critical of our group for not getting more involved. Are we wrong? Or are they getting sucked too far in? Mass leaders are being pulled into the Democratic Party. I wonder how involved we really should be. The Left can either actively work against Reagan in the Mondale camp or else not at all. I think it's worth it to work against Reagan and hammer out why it is important. Reagan is dangerous, a real ideologue; probably the most ideologically coherent president since Roosevelt. I do agree with the perspective of focusing on local campaigns. And I do, by the way, think Reagan can be defeated if some of the Jackson constituency votes.

RD: But the problem is that Jackson and the Rainbow constituency tried to get in and change the party and they just got sold out. They got a face on TV, more Black participation, but that was it. What's outrageous is that it is really clear that Reagan has targeted minorities, and yet the Democratic Party doesn't even lift a finger to reach out. I agree Reagan is dangerous, but I think after this convention more people will see that the Democratic Party has sold them out. (I'm talking about Black people.) I just can't see going out and trying to win them back into the fold.

MM: Yes, to me the important thing is how do we give leadership to those people who got a more revolutionary consciousness out of this? Do we demand enthusiastic support for Mondale? Do we go along with Jackson's criticism of his delegates for booing Andrew Young when he sold people out on the voting rights issue or with his chastisement of Hispanics for even discussing walking off the floor?

CW: I think there is a real difference between the Democrats and Republicans. I also think it is important to buy time now to build up the Left, and it is going to be a lot harder with a Reagan presidency where we are pushed more and more on the defensive. We have to keep in perspective that Rainbow politics is just getting off the ground. We have to work over the next four years to build it up.

GB: Yes. I think what we need to do is build up the anti-Reagan camp while not giving up on our own perspective on the Democratic Party. Basically, to hell with the Democratic Party. We don't have that many resources or that much energy, and it is not worth it to get heavily involved in the Democratic Party. Maybe people can get involved enough to check out how they function, but overall the Left is too small to really influence it. And there doesn't seem to be that much room for democratic participation.

CW: We should vote for Mondale to give us more room to move in the next four years. Our main efforts should be on building the Rainbow politics locally. If Mondale wins, we should take him on in 1988. If Reagan wins, the Democratic Party will be weaker and will need the Rainbow constituency more. If progressives have done their work right, the Democrats might be forced to bend.

MM: I really feel the Democratic Party, after that show at the convention, is going to

lose its credibility very fast. I don't put much trust in Jackson. I think people are going to turn cynical. I really worry about it locally. I worry that Jackson is just going to abandon people to dive into the mainstream Democratic Party; or else pull them along to the right with him.

BF: It would be good if Jackson does run against Strom Thurmond. Doing that would make clear that working in the Democratic Party is not a principle. If he could build a successful campaign it would be a model for others. But I do think that the Rainbow coalition is going to have to work in the Democratic Party as well as outside it.

FM: What is the significance of the Ferraro vice presidential candidacy?

ST: I think it is the one really positive thing about the Mondale candidacy. Sure, it's just symbolism. It's not a program. But it means something in America. There are some statistics that say 80% of the population doesn't believe a woman could be president.

CW: Where I work, people aren't interested in voting for Mondale, but they'll vote for Ferraro.

MM: My reaction to the Ferraro candidacy is more mixed. We can't lose sight of the fact that the biggest movement up until the convention was a movement of Black people. And then what happens? A white woman gets the vice presidential spot. Usually I try to argue against it when people pit women and Blacks against each other, but this was really a glaring example.

CW: Yes, and it's not the first time. It's historically pretty common in the U.S., from as far back as the suffragist campaign to get the vote.

ST: Actually, I thought Jackson handled that issue pretty well. He brought in a list of Black and Hispanic women and said to Mondale's campaign, if you're going to consider a qualified woman candidate, why not consider these? I completely agree with what MM said. But still, it is a significant event that a woman got nominated. It forces people to deal with the issue of a woman being in the highest position in the land—you know, just a heart beat away and all that.

MM: That's true. But my question is, can you assume all women gain by a white woman getting the nomination?

ST: No.

MM: So, if it's a gain for white women only, it's not the same at all. It doesn't empower women of color. If a woman of color had gotten it, it would indeed have been a gain for all women. It's important not to be sucked into the myth that it's a gain for all women.

LN: Still, not to be too optimistic, we should always look for the potential for alliances and the possibility of developing multinational women's organizing. The report of the women's caucus at the convention was that they gave a very positive response to Jackson. There may be room for movement there between women and Black caucuses; room for alliances.

BF: The way the media approached the issue certainly didn't play up any connection. For instance, there was a big spread in *Newsweek* basically presenting a list of women who have become prominent in bourgeois politics. You know, a chronology of devel-

oping women's involvement. They didn't even mention Shirley Chisholm. That said something to me about the way the whole situation is being viewed.

FM: Well, can we try to reach some conclusion from our discussion? It seems everyone is for something like a "Dump Reagan" campaign. (General agreement) And is voting for the Mondale-Ferraro ticket part of that. (General agreement) We didn't really get to what this means beyond this. We'll have to work more on specific goals and tactics.

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If This is Tuesday, It Must Be "Mondale": Looking at the Jackson Rainbow Coalition and the Upcoming Election

The Democratic and Republican conventions have both come and gone, and the November election looms in our future like a rising moon. In light of these two events, leftists and other progressives are forced to evaluate our attitude toward the November election. Specifically, the alternatives are one of abstention from the Presidential elections or some form of anti-Reagan mobilization. The following article argues that the supporters and activists of the Rainbow Coalition should build the anti-Reagan campaign as a continuation of the work begun during the primaries.

JACKSON'S RAINBOW COALITION: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

How does one define success? This is a question which more progressives should have asked in the early part of the Presidential campaign. Reactions to the Democratic Convention have, in fact, been influenced by very different definitions of success.

The Jackson campaign resulted in a mass, national political mobilization of the African-American people. Every objective report admits that had it not been for the Jackson campaign, voter registration would not have been nearly what it was over '83-'84. Further, the Jackson campaign did not come out of nowhere. It grew in large part from a city-by-city, region-by-region electoral upsurge which began several years ago, though it only came to be recognized with the election of Harold Washington as Mayor of Chicago. Thus, the Jackson campaign was rooted in and further developed this national electoral motion: a movement which was—and is—a clear expression of the demand for Black political power.

The Jackson campaign weathered many storms, and went on to result in a significant political bloc in many states. Jackson won the popular vote in Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C. This all happened after the "Hymie Incident," which severely hurt the campaign in New England. It is significant that many pollsters and media commentators counted Jackson out after the Hymie Incident and the defeats in New England. Few of them expected the comeback represented by the New York primary, for example, and subsequent victories. Nor was there anticipation of the support Jackson received from many Chicanos, as represented by the close vote in the Mexican American Political Association over endorsement. All told, Jackson captured 20% of the popular vote nationally, and more than 80% of the Afro-American vote. The Jackson campaign's ability to rebound after

a major political embarrassment indicated the real roots of the campaign in a mass movement, rather than the candidacy being one of "protest" or "conscience."

The Jackson campaign was in many ways a "people's campaign." Despite some real problems of bureaucratic thinking (and styles of work) within the campaign, and some top-down practices, the populist flavor of the campaign brought forward many grass-roots activists, including the contributions of many politically inexperienced people. The campaign did not have the support—politically or financially—of the Democratic Party establishment, and thus had to rely on the masses, probably more than some campaign leaders would have preferred. In some areas the populist flavor of the campaign was influenced by prior local progressive elections and struggles, such as Boston's Mel King mayoral campaign. While the Left would certainly have aimed to build a more all-round people's campaign out of the Jackson candidacy, the Rainbow Coalition was certainly the most progressive and rank-and-file motion on the national political/electoral scene in years.

The Jackson campaign posed the question of "independent politics" in a very concrete way. Any serious independent political party—that is, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties—will not only have to have an anti-racist, and pro-people platform, but it will have to be based on a mass movement. Independent, protest candidacies and parties have risen and fallen for lack of a mass movement. The necessity for an independent party must outlive a Presidential campaign. The issues raised by the Jackson candidacy, its base in the national movements, and its "anti-Establishment" character forced the addressing of goals which in many instances are independent of the Democratic Party. This is the case regardless of the specific objectives of Rev. Jackson-the-person. Jackson's personal consideration of running for Senate in South Carolina as an independent is perhaps a reflection of pressure to look beyond the Democratic Party.

The Jackson campaign raised debate on U.S. foreign policy and challenged many old assumptions. It is very consistent with U.S. political history that had the Jackson campaign restricted itself to criticisms of domestic U.S. problems, many liberal "friends" of Afro-Americans would have been pleased. Once Jackson and the campaign looked beyond U.S. borders, however, all hell broke loose. One need only reflect back 20 years to the furor raised when Malcolm X and later Dr. Martin Luther King "dared" to challenge the policies and practices of the U.S.A. on a world-scale. Liberal "friends" of the Civil Rights movement—including some Blacks—repudiated Dr. King for his outspoken denunciation of the criminal U.S. intervention in Indochina. The Jackson campaign of '83-'84 proposed to the U.S. public a different relationship between the U.S.A. and the rest of the world, specifically a relationship based on non-intervention and mutual respect. It also specifically targeted and challenged the U.S. role in Soviet-U.S. world contention; Israel and the Palestinian national question; South Africa; and Central America. For attacking U.S. world domination, Jackson and the campaign gained the wrath of liberals and conservatives alike.

There are two other factors worth noting, specifically, the candidate's willingness to

be self-critical and the ability of those sectors of the U.S. Left in the campaign to work together toward a common end. As mentioned in a previous article, the "Hymie Incident" was poorly handled by Jackson the candidate and the campaign leadership as a whole.¹ Yet Jackson's willingness to admit error and to offer more than a superficial explanation separated him from many current and past candidates. Additionally, Jackson's ability to bear up under constant press harassment with regard to this incident was quite admirable. Even after Jackson's Framingham apology, the press would continue to ask him about the "Hymie" remark. Contrast this with the press's hands-off approach to Reagan's anti-Italian joke in the 1980 election or to his insane, stupid and telling remark about bombing the Soviet Union.

The ability of sections of the Left to work together was another factor of some importance, indicating some breaking down of sectarian barriers which have existed.² Many leftists played prominent roles in the campaign, and helped the work of the Coalition. This ability to work together has possibly set the stage for more coordinated work and discussion locally.



THE JACKSON CAMPAIGN AND THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

Jesse Jackson walked into the Democratic Convention leader of a viable movement, and himself representative of a very real political candidacy. For months, the campaign raised issues such as defense of the Voting Rights Act, end to the system of dual primaries, strong affirmative action language for the Party platform, no first use of nuclear weapons, cuts in the military budget, and—interestingly enough—a woman as the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate. The outcome of the Convention proved disappointing to many Jackson supporters and to many it proved disorienting as well. The Party's response to these and other issues seemed to call many things into question.

Within the context of the Democratic Party the Jackson Rainbow Coalition was able to influence some platform language. Most significantly, and too often overlooked, was the influence of the Jackson campaign on the choice of a woman Vice-Presidential candidate. When Rev. Jackson began raising the issue fairly early in the campaign, few people—including many white women activists—paid any attention. When the matter of a woman VP became an issue this summer, however, all too many of the concept's supporters forgot or ignored the candidacy of Rev. Jackson. Thus, too many white Democrats looked at the VP choice as arising out of either the strength of the women's movement or from Mondale's alleged sensitivity to the issue of women's equality. Neither is true. It happened because of the Rainbow Coalition.

The central fact is, however, that Jackson delegates and supporters were right to be angry! The Rainbow Coalition's efforts to offer reforms within the context of the Democratic Party were blunted. With the exception of affirmative action language (which was watered down), the minority planks were shot down. The defeat of these reform challenges represented several things. For one, the ruling bloc of the Democratic Party was resisting a rank-and-file motion which they could not control. In some ways more

THOSE WHITES
WHO ONCE
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BRUNNENBERG 5-20

NOW PUT US
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DUT UNPUBLISHED FROM SYRACUSE

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WELL,
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WORTHY-



AND HE GOT
ELECTED
PRESIDENT
TWICE!



SUPPORTED
BY THE
SAME WHITE
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I DONT
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BUT I
SUPPORT
HIM FOR
WHO HE
SCARES.

importantly, the Party leadership was acting on a conclusion which they have been developing since Reagan's victory in 1980: Democratic success meant appealing to Reagan's constituency on essentially the same issues raised by Reagan himself. While New York Governor Mario Cuomo and others vehemently attacked Reagan and Reaganism, they have been unwilling to break with this assumption. Attacking Reagan for his lack of Christian morality, as did VP candidate Ferraro, may be a somewhat humorous and ironic rhetorical point, but it will not win votes. The Rainbow constituencies will, however. As noted by James Ridgeway in *The Village Voice*:

*Jesse Jackson took his campaign to build the Rainbow Coalition as far as he could, and it went farther than most would have believed possible. For Walter Mondale, however, it is a different matter. Mondale's presidential campaign depends on the Rainbow. Without it, he has no chance in the big cities, not a prayer in the South, in Texas or California. If his campaign plays only to Archie Bunker and Joe Six Pack, Mondale cannot win.*³

The Party leadership's conservative approach to November was signified by the rejection of the bulk of the minority planks, but also by the on-again/off-again support by many Democrats for the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill. This bill, which would attack the democratic rights of Latinos in the U.S.A., was being pushed by Democratic Congressional leadership at the same time that the Latino voter was being told that the Democratic Party was the solution to the problems of the Reagan years.

Perhaps one of the most interesting occurrences at the Convention was the reaction to the speech by Rev. Jackson.

*Ironically, for many the bitterest blow was Jackson's speech. To whites it was deeply emotional, but to many black delegates the speech was much too conciliatory, abandoning the struggle for principle in concession to party unity after minority interests had just been sold out on the platform.*⁴

Not only Black delegates, but many Black observers of the Convention were disappointed, at least in part, by Jackson's remarks (despite a popular recognition of the brilliance of the address). Why? There are probably several reasons. For one, the context. The defeats suffered by the Rainbow Coalition at the Convention stung and Jackson's remarks did not appear to acknowledge these defeats. Specifically, many observers would have preferred for Jackson to have pushed the Party leadership more, perhaps with the threat of some sort of walk-out (along the lines of the threat raised by Latino delegates). Second, though this should not be exaggerated, there were elements of an "apology" in his speech. Some of the apology was, in my opinion, a Christian rhetorical style (no slight intended). At the same time, Jackson's reference to seeing Humphrey shortly before the latter's passing and the issue of forgiveness seemed to go a bit far, agitating many people who felt Jackson had apologized enough (specifically regarding the Hymie incident).

Viewed as a whole, however, the speech was a stinging indictment of the Reagan Administration and Reaganism as a social philosophy. It was as exciting and emotionally moving as it was in part due to the clarity which Jackson's remarks brought

to the issue. Reaganism was ripped apart, dramatically so at that. The speech did not take full account of events in the Convention except to say that regardless of victory or defeat, the Rainbow Coalition had to raise certain issues. The speech addresses, for the most part, events which preceded the Convention as well as the need to mobilize against Reagan. The speech represents a call or plea to the Party to turn and face the Rainbow constituencies if it hopes to succeed in defeating Reagan. Jackson asks, in his speech, that the Democratic Party "signal" the Rainbow constituencies of its (the Party's) willingness to address their concerns. And, overall, the speech, especially as it heated up, represented something of a rallying cry to the "troops" to continue the battle against Reaganism.

THE DEMOCRATS WEREN'T DEMOCRATS

One of the sources of the disorientation coming out of the Democratic Convention was different estimates as to what the Democratic Party could and would do. While we and other activists in the Left fought for the reforms of the Democratic Party, the lasting impact of the Rainbow Coalition as a mass political movement was our principal concern.

It is not my intention to slander anyone when I say that many activists who have much invested in the Democratic Party saw the Rainbow Coalition and the Jackson campaign as *principally* a Black-led reform movement of the Democratic Party. For them, the defeats at the Convention were a major blow.

Still other activists, made optimistic by the dramatic growth of the Jackson campaign, had an "... ain't no stopping us now ..." orientation. There is much that is positive in this view because the Rainbow Coalition can, under certain conditions, proceed and not be halted. However, history has shown that the Democratic Party can and will resist African-American demands for reform. The 1964 Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenge at the Democratic National Convention is one case in point. The MFDP, based on a real movement, sought the Mississippi seat at the Convention on the justification that they (the MFDP) represented the true Democratic Party ideals from the state of Mississippi. Lyndon Johnson sent the liberal Hubert Humphrey to appease the delegates, but their seating as the Mississippi delegation was refused. In 1968, Black voters, along with many others, took the "Dump the Hump" stand and sat out the election: Nixon won. In 1972, when a truly liberal Democrat, George McGovern, was chosen (and at least claimed to want to reach out broadly in seeking support), the Democratic Party establishment turned their backs on his candidacy, preferring to lose the election rather than permit a liberal in the Oval Office.

The Democratic Party knows the strength of the Afro-American vote. They have chosen to take it for granted on the assumption that African-Americans can and will go nowhere. They also assume, as noted earlier, that the critical need is to win white conservative voters rather than mobilize the mass of disenfranchised voters: the Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, the mass of women, the poor and the unorganized.

Mobilizing the "Rainbow" threatens the stability of the ruling bloc in the Democratic Party. It means introducing a very unpredictable element into Party politics.

While the Democratic Party *may* turn more toward the disenfranchised, especially as those "... old minorities become a new majority ..." it will do so unevenly and reluctantly. And more importantly, it will do so in such a way as to cut the guts out of this vibrant movement. Rather than cynicism coming out of the Convention (and out of similar such battles to be fought in the future on the national, state and city levels) progressive forces should recognize objectives which go beyond reforming the Democratic Party and go more in the direction of transforming a mass electoral upsurge into a lasting political movement, if not a political party. To paraphrase a poem by Langston Hughes: we beat our fists against the wall; sometimes we break our fists; sometimes not.



WAITING FOR A "SIGNAL"?: THE RAINBOW COALITION CAN BE A LASTING POLITICAL FORCE

If, in fact, Rev. Jackson's speech to the Democratic Convention was conciliatory, it would appear to have been a tactical mistake since the candidate's post-Convention

activity indicated little conciliation (even including his August 28th meeting and endorsement of Mondale). Soon after the Convention word spread that Jackson was considering running as an *independent* against South Carolina's noted reactionary Senator Strom Thurmond. In many ways this potential move was very much in line with two points raised consistently by Rev. Jackson: (1) as mentioned in the speech, *justice will come out of the South* (i.e., the impact of the battle for Black political power will propel the movement for social justice), and (2) that Rainbow activists should develop local struggles. Jackson ended up not running, however, and instead announced his intention to campaign against Reagan and register voters.

Jackson's post-Convention stance may be viewed by many as depression or disgruntlement with the Democratic Party. While both may be true, it is more important to view his actions as a statement. The problem is that while the statement has been made, it has not been clearly *verbalized*, even though as of this writing he has now come out in full endorsement of Mondale/Ferraro. In many respects this is symptomatic of a style and weakness of the Rainbow Coalition:

Jackson's campaign organization is unconventional with its small national staff and loose network. . . . Indisputably, Jackson is the head of the entire operation, despite a national campaign director and a campaign advisory group. The organization is wherever Jackson is, and he makes many of the decisions about his schedule of campaign stops from the road.

*The campaign has been called disorganized, but one insider suggests the proper word is "unorganized" since little structure was ever imposed.*⁵

Regardless of how progressive Rev. Jackson may now be, no leader can be held accountable to and by the base, and no movement can realize its potential if it does not set clear goals and have a workable, realistic structure. A big danger to Rainbow politics is Jackson's freedom to make deals and set direction relatively free of discussion and exchange with the base. If the Rainbow Coalition can only be summed up as a movement to reform the Democratic Party, it will remain and have been an important motion. It will not have, however, realized its potential, either as an expression of the present demand for Black political power, or as the potential coming-into-being of a "new majority."⁶

The most immediate problem is the November election. Many Democratic Party activists, as well as people at the base, have said that the stand of the Rainbow Coalition should depend on a "signal" from the Mondale camp (people may continue to say this even with Rev. Jackson's endorsement of Mondale). In other words, active work against Reagan and for Mondale should depend on some indication from Mondale that the Rainbow will be taken seriously. The question is: what will this signal look like or sound like? What if we only get half a signal? What about a quarter of a signal?

The Rainbow Coalition cannot wait for a "signal." It must decide for itself *independently* what is at stake in November; what are the balance of forces; and what will be gained/lost by whatever stand the Coalition takes. Depending on the Demo-

cratic Party for a signal turns the Rainbow Coalition more and more into a Democratic Party reform movement, and further from an independent-minded political force. Rev. Jackson stressed work at the local level and this should not depend on Mondale. Work in the South should not depend on Mondale. In fact, opposition to Reagan should not depend on Mondale.

Given the weakness of Left-Progressive forces on the national level, mounting a viable and winning independent presidential campaign is down the road.⁷ For the immediate future, most liberal, progressive and left-wing peoples will be caught in a "lesser of two evils" situation *on the national level*. Short of a rapid political realignment, Left and Progressive forces will be faced with the choice between a conservative Republican and a more-than-likely distasteful Democrat. While pressuring for reforms within the Democratic Party and for better platform language, and while making specific national ventures, Left and Progressive forces should concentrate their energies on the local level. Here, as a number of other groups in the Left have noted, the Rainbow Coalition can potentially make breakthroughs.⁸ In time, an independent presidential candidacy which can actually challenge the Democratic and Republican Parties can be built.

The Rainbow Coalition can and should champion the "Vote Out Reagan" cause regardless of Mondale; perhaps in some ways, despite Mondale. Richard Viguerie, the ultraconservative "populist" gave several reasons why, despite some differences with Reagan, that he would be supporting the incumbent: the several members of the U.S. Supreme Court whose retirement from the bench will likely take place within the next four years. These are several of the reasons we should oppose Reagan. There are other reasons:

*Poverty in the world's wealthiest nation is on the rise. Between 1980 and 1982, the number of Americans living below the official poverty line rose from 29.3 million to 34.4 million. In 1980, 13 percent of the American people were poor; in 1982, 15 percent were poor . . . In 1982, 47 percent of black children under the age of 18 were living below the U.S. poverty level . . . In 1982, 16 percent of white children were living below the poverty level.*⁹

There are additional reasons such as continued U.S. aggression in Central America and the threat to widen the war through an invasion of Nicaragua. For the Reagan clique, the end of "detente" has meant stepped-up superpower contention, all of which has helped to move the world closer to nuclear disaster.

The politics of the Jackson campaign/Rainbow Coalition addressed these and other issues. The views of Rev. Jackson clearly out-stepped those of other Democratic Party contenders. In that sense, a Rainbow Coalition anti-Reagan campaign would be carried out despite Mondale. While a serious "Vote Out Reagan" campaign must encourage people to vote for Mondale, it should not be because of Mondale's views. Mondale is preaching a conservative New Dealism, and is concerned with modifying some policies of imperialism. The question for the Rainbow Coalition is whether by building the anti-Reagan fight we can buy time and create better conditions for future struggle.

If, by making use of contradictions between different wings of the U.S. bourgeoisie, the Left and Progressive forces can create some breathing space, we will have done a lot. A Reagan victory will encourage the more conservative New Right in the same way that unchecked racial attacks against oppressed nationalities encourage bolder attacks and atrocities. "... Ain't no stopping us now ..." is a slogan with which the reactionaries can unite.

Rev. Jackson has met with and endorsed the candidacy of Mondale/Ferraro. Many activists of the Rainbow Coalition may be justifiably skeptical about jumping on the Mondale bandwagon, especially in light of the Democratic Convention. Rainbow activists may not hear a "signal" from Mondale, regardless of what the Presidential candidate may choose to say or do. For the long-term interests of the Rainbow Coalition, we must not wait for signals from the Democratic Party. A progressive anti-Reagan campaign can be tied directly to local campaigns and especially to furthering the demands of oppressed nationalities for political power. Building up the strength of the Rainbow Coalition over the long-term will necessitate battles and victories which take place primarily on the local level. An independent-minded politics, followed by a fully independent politics will have to be as concrete as the Jackson campaign in order to galvanize popular support. Taking the banner of anti-Reaganism away from conservative Democrats means defining anti-Reaganism in our own terms, using our own objectives.

—Bill Fletcher, Jr.
August 1984

NOTES

1. "The Jackson Campaign in Massachusetts," *Forward Motion*, June 1984.
2. A criticism was offered by several comrades of my previous article on the Jackson campaign in Massachusetts in that I made no mention of the fact that the Left was able to work well together. To this criticism I plead partially guilty. The sections of the Left in Massachusetts which chose to support the Jackson campaign did work relatively well together. My principal concern, however, can be summed up in the final page of the article where I mentioned that the campaign offered the Black Left specifically, and the general Left as well, an opportunity to reorganize, concentrate its collective forces and make some breakthroughs in a way that we have not recently. While the Nation of Islam could speak out for the campaign and speak for itself, the Left was—overall—unable or unwilling to play a similar role—this is true despite the excellent work of many organizations and individuals. The point which I was attempting to hit upon went beyond the issue of working together, though I acknowledge my oversight in not affirming it as a valid point.
3. "The Hell With Mondale": Bitter Minorities Threaten Coalition," *Village Voice*, July 31, 1984, p. 50.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
5. Ronald Smothers, "The Impact of Jesse Jackson," *New York Times Magazine*, March 4, 1984, p. 52.
6. Rev. Jackson noted in an interview: "This is not an ethnic march; this is a political movement to pull together the strength of rejected groups so they may be able to serve more effectively and be served better by their Government." *Playboy*, June, 1984, p. 188.

7. It may be a controversial point, but it is my opinion that were Rev. Jackson to choose to run as an independent candidate for President that this would cause a crisis in the Rainbow Coalition due to the variety of factors which have led different forces to support his candidacy in the first place: this point being as true about forces from the Black Liberation Movement as forces from other social movements.
8. The League of Revolutionary Struggle and the Communist Workers Party, along with other groups, seem to have come to similar conclusions. Working at the local level does not mean in or out of the Democratic Party: that is a choice which will have to be made tactically.
9. "Black and White Infant Deaths: A Widening Gap." *Clearinghouse Review*, July, 1984, p. 263.

Thoughts on the West Side of Wisconsin

Mighty Mississippi

moving
past the driftless hills of Wisconsin
as our iron horse rumbles up
towards your source.

Evening haze

masks
the blood puddles that linger
from the massacre of Bad Axe Creek
Black Hawk's people deserved better.

Your snake like meandering

cloaks
the ghost of Sam Clemens
with the wreckage of steamboats.
He wrote of and for the people.

The setting sun

drops
silently westward.
Hughe's poems of great rivers
floods my mind.

Mississippi Power

thwarted
in nineteen hundred and sixty-four
will flow
with Fannie Lou and Afro-America from
south to north someday
cleaning
all the puddles of blood
from our nation's history.

Rob Peterson
August, 1982/84

The Farrakhan Controversy: Smokescreen For Racism?

Author's note: *The following article seeks to give one evaluation of the general reaction of the media and America to Louis Farrakhan, and his vocal presence in the debate over issues in the presidential race. It intentionally does not pretend to give an assessment of the relationship between Black folk and Jewish folk, American or otherwise. It intentionally does not attempt to evaluate anti-Jewish tendencies that may or may not exist in the national Black community, or in the Nation of Islam. It intentionally avoids a critique of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. These things are probably due some kind of treatment; it was simply not the intention of the author to address all these things. Hopefully, some of you may be inspired to respond to some of these ideas, or to answer for the rest of us any questions raised by the article.*

* * *

Louis Farrakhan has raised eyebrows, tempers, and a storm of controversy in the last few months, and may be the dominant character in history's retelling of the Jesse Jackson campaign. Now that Jackson has doused the fires of controversy with a moving, historic convention speech, as well as with an earlier repudiation of Farrakhan's statements, it might be worthwhile poking the ashes around a bit to discover some slightly different perspectives.

Let's look at Farrakhan first. He unequivocally blasted Jewish control of the media, the Jewish role in the oppression of Black people, the criminal creation of the Israeli state, and Judaism itself as a "dirty religion." Clearly, some of this exaggerates the role and position of Jewish people in this country, and in relation to Black people. Why does he do this? Firstly, Farrakhan represents a long tradition of religious zealotry among Muslims in this country. The Nation of Islam under Elijah Muhammed in the 50's and 60's printed all manner of virulent attacks against Christianity and Judaism, and the God (or Gods) they worshipped. Those attacks diminished under Wallace Muhammed, who opened the re-named American Muslim Mission to whites, who were formerly deemed "devils." Farrakhan brought back the "old-style religion" when he broke from Wallace Muhammed, and restored the NOI.

In a somewhat calculated move, Farrakhan toned down his criticism of Christians and Christian ideology; the obvious reason for this is the predominance of Black Christians in this country. Farrakhan was and is trying to assert himself as a leader who could speak to the broad masses of Afro-Americans. As he was in the past, Farrakhan is extremely vocal in his criticisms of Jews and Judaism, often without basis, sometimes with.

Many of Farrakhan's notions stand in the way of progressive thinking. He still refers to "blue-eyed devils," still distinguishes between "us" (the chosen people) and "them" (white people), and supports very reactionary practices with regard to women. Sexual

preference is not a right he would support. Clearly, then, we cannot allow him to speak for the Black left.

Let's put all this in the context of the last few months. The Minister himself advises us, "When an unrighteous person brings us news . . . the first person to be investigated is the person that bears the news." Who is it who brings judgment against Farrakhan?

The white media has always had a difficult time digesting Black anger, or Black people with "bad attitudes." (This is nothing new; it probably goes back to slavery.) When you consider the level of involvement in terrorist activity, the Black Panther Party received a disproportionate level of negative publicity compared to groups like the Ku Klux Klan or the Nazi Party. Malcolm X was only portrayed as a white-hating race-monger. The KKK killings in Greensboro were seen more as an intergroup dispute than as a racist, terrorist attack on anti-racist forces.

The fact is that the media has been more critical and less tolerant of anti-racist violence than of racist violence. This clearly reflects a deep and justifiable fear in white America of Black anger, and the potential for violence that accompanies that anger. Farrakhan is an angry champion of the cause of Black people, a voice heard and applauded by a large Black audience across America. The media villifies Farrakhan as some measure of restraint on him, and hopefully the onslaught of Black violence. The media would not have given Farrakhan a hearing except to attack him, because the combination of circumstances that united him with a Presidential aspirant also linked anger with the truth of Black oppression. If we have to let Jesse speak the truth, we cannot let Louis get people riled up about it.

The coverage of both Jackson and Farrakhan reeks of hypocrisy; the fundamental issue of racism and the oppression of our people has been readily overlooked in favor of "anti-Semitism on the part of Black Leaders." What was the line about the splinter your brother's eye and the log in your own?

White America has the audacity to ask Black people to repudiate Farrakhan. Has it repudiated administration officials who racially insult Hispanics, or congressmen who insult the Chinese? The justification there always seems to be that everybody doesn't agree with everyone else all the time. Well. Jesse Jackson does not agree with Farrakhan on all matters; the Black left does not agree with Jesse Jackson on all matters. Both of those individuals have a role in the united front; both are representatives of sectors of the Black masses. I believe Jackson to have been justified in declining to criticize Farrakhan as long as he did; his statement, when he did make one, went further than it should have in attempting to appease the media and the Democrats. Was Farrakhan unjustified when he challenged the legitimacy of the Israeli state, or charged it with international crimes? I think not.

Farrakhan represents to white America the most evident left pole of the Black movement. He is not a fringe fanatic; he has a sizeable following, and a larger audience. He has taken strong stands against racism and imperialism, and stands firmly on a separatist nationalist philosophy; these positions make sense to a great many Black people, not to mention a few Marxists. While we would not agree with his strategy and tactics, as Marxists we stand by his opposition to imperialism in the Mid-East and South Africa,

his opposition to racism, and in his belief in the struggle for a Black nation. Farrakhan may represent ultra-left tendencies; he may also express right-wing views. He may have no lasting interest in the multi-national progressive coalition. He may be in need of criticism. But he is a strident left voice, and he should be supported for his correct criticism of the U.S. state. Marxists have no more reason to break with Farrakhan than they have to break with Mr. Jackson. Farrakhan speaks a great deal of truth.

The Minister is a match held to the fuse of Black America, but he is only a match. He is brazen in his warnings of violence, but he only points out what America would choose to ignore, and that is the potential for violence by Black people. If the ruling class is worried, all the more reason for us to stand beside Farrakhan. As he has said, "Let the dogs beware."

—Ron Davis
August 1984

Reagan and Ideology

In the wake of Reagan's election in 1980 the conclusion drawn by many in the mainstream, as well as many of us on the left was that Reagan's victory was as much a vote against Carter as it was a vote for Reagan. As Reagan stands on the verge of re-election it would seem that while we were correct in identifying a strong anti-Carter sentiment, we cannot underestimate the popularity of Reagan's message.

The left has often tended to portray Reagan much as Reagan has portrayed the left — as evil incarnate. This position, while making for nice speeches to the converted, makes for bad analysis. The New Right in general, and Reagan in particular have hit upon a number of truths that the Left needs to analyze and act on. One of these truths is what makes Reagan unique among modern presidents — a conscious and verbalized ideology.

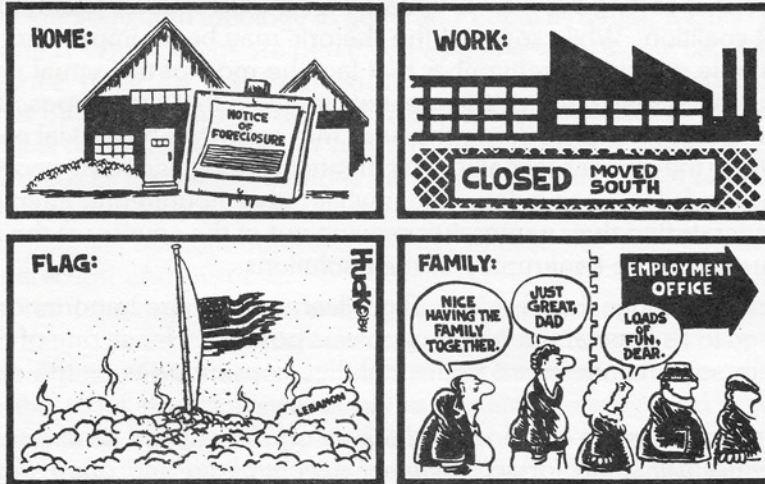
Recent presidents have all come to policy conclusions and then gone looking for the philosophies to provide the theoretical underpinnings for them. As it becomes politically expedient to change the policy, the philosophies, within the limited bourgeois spectrum, changed accordingly. Reagan alone has started from a philosophical base, dating back to his days as an actor, and then gone looking for issues that would be consistent with that ideology. He rarely changes his view for the sake of political expediency. (Though at times the emphasis may shift due in part to an internal debate within the conservatives as to which particular issues are important at any given point in time. e.g. — the importance of the deficit.)

This consistency has helped rather than hurt Reagan in the long run, because people see him as a "strong leader" and someone who is tough. This has been borne out by the polls where Reagan's policies often get negative ratings, but his personal popularity remains relatively high. That Reagan's strength is his ideology rather than specific policies is a fact not lost on the people marketing Reagan in this election year. Reagan's commercials are a classic in "soft sell." They are soothing, optimistic and patriotic and above all avoid issues if at all possible. In one, we see chubby toddlers waving flags at a parade, smiling workers pouring out of bustling factories, and a beaming couple getting married. Reagan isn't even mentioned by name until the closing shot of a flag draped portrait while a resonant voice intones "It's morning again in America. Why should we ever return to where we were less than four short years ago?"

Termed the Teflon president by many reporters, people are amazed that nothing seems to stick to Reagan. But these people miss the entire point of what people want from a president. Issues have always been secondary in the majority of people's minds when compared with the more abstract qualities such as leadership, honesty, and integrity. Issue candidates, even when they were dealing with issues of overwhelming importance to the national consciousness have usually lost. McGovern was only the

latest example of this. Nor should this be surprising. Most people don't feel qualified to second-guess the president around policy decisions and therefore base their vote on who they believe will make "the right" decision no matter what the issue. (This is not to say that people don't disagree, but rather they don't have much to offer in the way of alternatives.) And what is "the right" decision? It's a decision that people feel makes sense to them, or they might make themselves. Often it's simplistic, and it changes all the time as the material conditions and national consciousness changes. These changes in turn are reflected in the different presidents that are elected.

REAGAN'S CAMPAIGN THEMES:



Reagan is no exception to this. Coming out of WWII the piecemeal approach to national policy worked fine so long as the war economy continued to grow and enough people could be bought off before they started asking too many questions. The need for a consciously-stated ideology was small because it looked like the status-quo could survive forever with fine-tunings here and there. Indeed the Kennedy administration supposedly sounded the death-knell for ideology and the 70's saw a conservative Republican president implement the epitome of liberal economic solutions — wage and price controls. But things were quickly coming unravelled. Despite pronouncements of peace with honor most people felt our country had lost Vietnam. Inflation and unemployment grew; dictatorships supported by our government were falling at a rapid rate; and the social programs of the 60's and 70's were proving to be bureaucratic nightmares only coincidentally helping those they were set out for. Both the left and the right were saying that we needed a radical change if life was going to get better. And it was the neo-conservatives who were able to verbalize this frustration, and more importantly, translate it into an ideology that offered people a positive vision of the future. People didn't want to hear about the moral equivalent of war, they didn't want to hear about more sacrifices, there was no longer any economic or social room for

guilt. Books such as *I'm Okay You're Okay* and *Looking Out for Number 1* were popular among the petit bourgeoisie and an ever greater number of people perceived that they were constantly getting the short end of the stick, both at home and internationally. Everyone was supposedly ganging up on us and it was time to fight back.

The neo-conservatives recognized early on that there was not enough money for guns and butter. There was no room in our capitalist patriarchy for equal rights for women and people of color. It was necessary to break unions and keep our dictators in power if we were going to make it through the crisis with the status-quo intact.

While this comes as no surprise to the left, it is a fact that the Democrats have still not been able to fully come to grips with. Some Democrats have tried to run out the usual plethora of social spending programs, updated for the 80's, in an attempt to revitalize the New Deal coalition. While some of the rhetoric may be an improvement over recent years, people still vividly remember that fact the most of the actual policies were miserable failures. Actually one of the greatest ironies is that the proposed policies of the Republican platform are similar to the ones that made the New Deal coalition possible, but because they were originally implemented so long ago most people don't remember that they failed once before. Meanwhile other floundering attempts such as the Atari Democrats find their namesakes moving out of the country at the first chance poignantly illustrating the bankruptcy of their solutions.

One of the other things that the New Right learned was the importance of putting out the ideology to as large a number of people as possible. Hence one of their biggest differences with some of the more traditional elite conservatives — the emphasis on populism.

Standing in opposition to the power of the establishment will be a new populist movement that will stand for self-reliance, decentralized and open, responsive government . . . By 'the establishment' I mean the class of persons, who through economic power or social status or an 'old boy' network have gained unusual access to political power . . . The establishment of Big Business, Big Government, Big Unions and their allies in organized religion, international banking, education, the law and the communications media. Together these groups work to concentrate power in a small elite minority. They oppose the transfer of decision-making from the federal level to the states, localities, and ultimately individual citizens. They reject the notion that decisions should be made at the level closest to the people and that ultimately people should decide for themselves how to live as long as they do not violate the equal rights of others to do so.
(Richard Vigurie, Publisher of *Conservative Digest*)

This editorial reprinted in *Conservative Digest* from the *Washington Post* (11/27/83) illustrates the populist sentiment that is so strong among the new right. It is a very conscious posture in which they try to disavow themselves from what they themselves perceive to be the Establishment Republicans. In the same issue as the above editorial was a cover story attack on George Bush that takes up a third of the entire January '84 issue.

"Call him a liberal, an 'establishmentarian', an elitist, but please don't call him a conservative. And please-oh please- don't call him a populist."

Many of the neo-conservative intellectuals came out of a period when liberals were into guilt. Guilt about themselves and their country. The neo-conservatives decided (correctly I believe) that this self-flagellation was leading nowhere. Out of this grew the political equivalent of looking out for number 1 and a fervent belief that people wanted to feel good about their future. This message was repeated not only by neo-conservative politicians, academics, and editorialists, but also by fundamentalist preachers, whose rise reinforces the importance of faith in hard times.

This importance of faith is another key aspect to the current popularity of the neo-conservative ideology, and ideology in general. People as a rule, want to feel optimistic about the future. When things are perceived as going well people can feel good about that and derive hope for the future from the present. But when that perception changes, that optimism must be derived from somewhere else. And that somewhere else often takes the form of belief, or faith. There is of course always a certain level of faith involved but as material conditions get worse, the amount of faith needed to sustain that optimism grows greater. Eventually this faith is not sustained by specific programs or policies, but calls out for an ideology to flesh out that faith, or set of beliefs, and give it direction and purpose.

This faith can take many forms, and one form that it often takes is religion. This is especially true in America, which among industrial nations is one of the most profoundly religious. One need only listen to the fundamentalist preachers for a little while to be able to tell how powerfully optimistic their message is and how cleverly they mix in comments on economics, politics, and morality to arrive at a very conservative message. Nor does the better life they preach come only in the future. Many evangelists liberally sprinkle their sermons with healings and other "miracles" to help convince people that their gospel, both moral and political, is the guidebook for the road of prosperity and good times.

The new-right theoreticians learned from the left in the 60's about the importance of ideology and therefore it's also not surprising to see the new right adopt many of the tactics of the left. From picketing abortion clinics to holding mass rallies around school prayer the new right has broken with the traditional conservatives in a very fundamental way—They encourage grassroots activism and participation. To a certain extent, much larger than the traditional conservatives, they even depend on it to make progress. Although the PAC's and fundamentalist religions get money from big sources, anyone who has been to a tent revival can see the importance of the small donation.

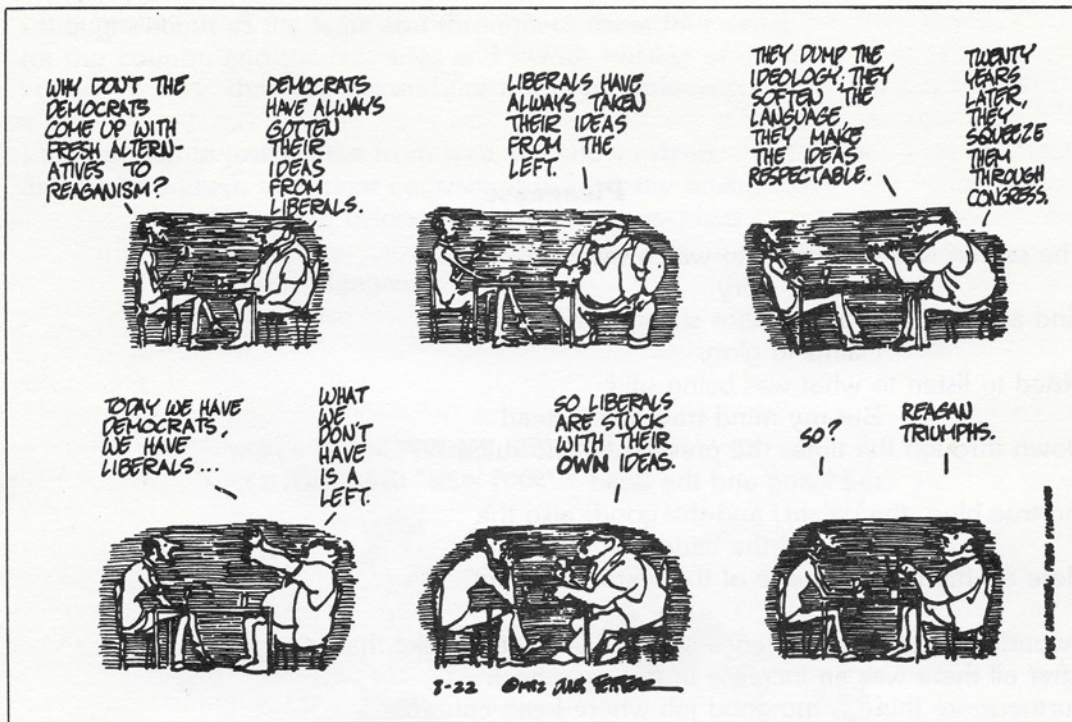
So what does all this mean for the left? What lessons can we learn and what does it say about our future as revolutionaries. The immediate picture is a gloomy one. The whole litany of Reagan's policy proposals threaten to bring us back to the time when Blacks and women knew their place and the bootstrap is liberally applied across the backs of the Third World in the name of anti-communism.

Yet the growth of the new-right also indicates that much of what we believe in and have struggled for need not be for naught.

One of the fundamental lessons that we can learn is that ideology is not dead, indeed people are hungry for an explanation of the world around them that transcends the answers given them by the piece meal politicians. Secondly we can learn that we need to put forth a positive vision of the future. Reagan has gotten a lot of mileage out of condemning the doom and gloom crowd, the nay-sayers who see disaster around every corner. While we could not stop criticizing those policies and ideas we disagree with, we need to go further than that and put forth an affirmative vision that deals with the issues in a comprehensive way. Having said that I think it is important to distinguish between the vision put forward by the neo-conservatives and the vision that we need to put forward. The neo-conservative vision is a sexist, racist and profoundly imperialist vision that purports to move this country forward by legislating the morality of the 50's in an attempt to recreate the economic growth of that period. The American *uber alles* form that this vision has taken was especially obvious at the Republican National Convention where all dissension regarding the party platform was summarily squashed, and Barry Goldwater with his cold war nationalism was trotted out as one of the founding fathers of the current Republican ideology. The propaganda got so heavy that even the usually meek television stations balked at showing the jingoistic introduction to Reagan's acceptance speech lest they seem completely in the pocket of the Republican public relations team.

We must make it clear that our vision of the future differs fundamentally from that of the Republicans and Democrats because we propose not merely to change the rules of the game, but to change the game as well. We must point out that we believe that a better future can be arrived at only by examining closely the socio-economic foundations that our society is based upon. This will put us in direct contrast with the new-right who take a decidedly anti-materialist view of the problem preferring to portray the present crisis as primarily a crisis of values, morals and manners. To the neo-conservatives the socio-economic foundations are fundamentally sound but are in the process of being undermined by loose morals, a lack of manners, and a lack of conviction. While this may be conscious on the part of the leaders of the new-right who have a very real stake in the preservation of the status-quo, it is much less conscious on the part of the populist base whose investment is primarily psychological.

It is the task of the left to acknowledge the legitimate criticisms the new right raised of liberal policies and rather than falling into the piecemeal trap, put forth a conceptual framework, or ideology, through which alternative solutions can be arrived at. Nor is it just pie-in-the-sky idealism. Polls have consistently shown that the solutions proposed by the new right are substantially less popular than the criticisms they raise. Many are not satisfied with the answers of the new right yet still want an ideology. It is no accident that the closest thing to fervor expressed about any one of the Democratic candidates was the Rainbow Coalition of Jesse Jackson, by far the most ideological candidate running.



The left needs to realize that people want to feel good about the future and their part in it. We need to put forth a positive vision of the future and show people how they fit into that vision. While we should not stop pointing out our roles as oppressors we need to also put forth a plan as to how people can change these roles and improve themselves in the process. Too often we tend to fall into a mentality of the worse things get, the better that is for us, but this is not a particularly inspiring message. Instead we need to counter neo-conservative Ayn Rand individualism by showing that people can grow individually and work collectively.

This is not going to be an easy task; anti-communism continues to run strong in this country and the mainstream political spectrum remains one of the most limited in any industrial nation. There are also a lot of contradictions that we still need to struggle through, just one of which is the role of nationalism. (Do we denounce all forms of nationalism as oppressive, and if not how do we avoid becoming jingoistic?) Yet the rise of the new right and Reagan shows that people are sincerely looking for an alternative to piecemeal politicians; an alternative that is more comprehensive and will help them to understand the world and feel good about the future. The time is right to engage the new right in a battle of world views because there is an audience, and ultimately it is our strength.

—Arvid Muller

Pleeeease

The screen was turned on to watch my
 favorite story
And all I saw was an ex-actor stating his
 claims to glory
I tried to listen to what was being said
 But my mind travelled instead
Down through the times the presidents who ruled
 the living and the dead
the true blue, the galant, and the good; also the
 bad and the badder
Here on my tube was one of the worse ones yet.

I wondered in true conscience should I really think like that
After all there was an increase in my pay check
Furthermore there is my good job where I can care for
All of the new jobless, homeless, moneyless, and otherwise
 hopeless, uncared for old, young and in-between
I wondered was I just being mean; but then there appeared thoughts of
 his deeds throughout this land
His involvements and/or endorsements from the master mind ministers
 and Ku Klux Klan
His indirect knocking on every door giving to the rich
 that which was taken from the poor

I thought about the cuts in education including my own followed by
 thoughts of cuts in childcare, social security, welfare
 school lunches, housing, equal opportunities, small businesses
 Large businesses and all jobs, with no cuts in despair.

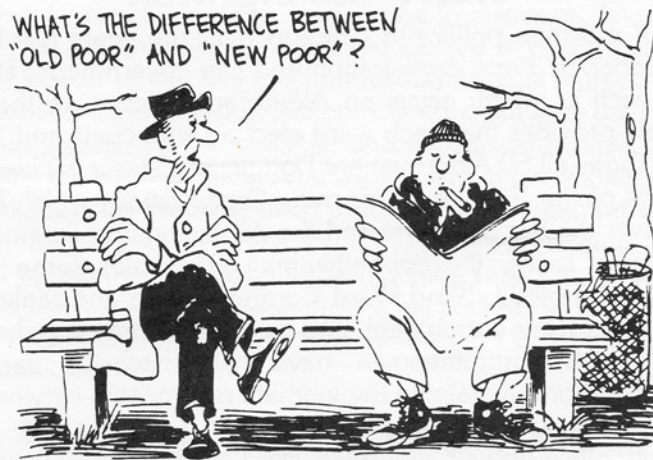
I thought how could we the rich, the middle and the near poor
eat and enjoy it while the poor and the new poor lived to endure it.

I thought about all the tears and throughout these four years
for our country and the countries and islands outside of our own
the lives lost and the truths yet unknown.

I thought about justification from way, way down deep
and I felt justified, with clear conscience in honestly saying
this man belongs among the dump heap

Dump Reagan
Pleeease

M.F.



Shaking Up Chicago Ward Politics

This article aims at describing some of the ferment within the Democratic Party in Chicago as it has developed in one ward in the City. This ward, the 22nd, while not exactly typical of the city as a whole, offers insight into the problems that face progressive activists trying to work within the Democratic Party. Key among these are construction of the Rainbow Coalition and of grass-roots political organization under a progressive banner.

CHALLENGING THE REGULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATION

One feature of machine politics in Chicago over the years has been the merger between the Democratic Party organization and city government. The city is divided into 50 wards, each of which elects an Alderman to serve on the city council. In addition, state law provides that each ward elect a Democratic and Republican Party committeeman. Today all 50 Aldermen are Democrats. This is the basis for the overlap between functions of the Regular Democratic Organization, which has elected most committeemen over the last 50 years, and the Alderman and Democratic Party committeeman. In some cases, the committeeman also holds some other office (for example, Dan Rostenkowski, 32nd Ward Committeeman and ranking Democrat on the House Ways and Means committee), and designates someone else to be Alderman. Historically, Aldermen/Committeemen have had extensive patronage at their disposal, as incentive for maintaining the intimate relationship between the voters and the Regular Democratic Organization.

Elections for city office (mayor, alderman, etc.) are held in off years; party committeemen are elected at the same time that the parties nominate state reps, congressmen, and presidents. Within the County and State Party Central Committees, a committeeman's vote is weighted based on the turnout for the party's candidates in the previous elections. Committeemen from the smaller wards, from wards with low voter turnout (historically, wards with large Latino populations), or from wards with Republican enclaves thus have fewer votes. This scheme is meant to inspire the ward organizations to get out the vote, and has complemented the patronage system: the more votes a precinct captain could turn out, the more influence his leader would have in the County Central Committee, and the more jobs could be expected to find their way to the faithful. (In other words, material incentives at work, Chicago-style.) Harold Washington's election, on the strength of the independent Democrats mainly in the Black communities of Chicago, meant the beginning of substantial change in this historic relationship.

Through years of challenging the Regular Democratic Organization, a variety of organizational forms have developed from ward to ward, and more broadly. This has

almost been like trying to construct a second party within a party. One example is the Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI), which has served as a watchdog against vote fraud, has developed an endorsement process and activists who oppose machine politicians and practices. The IVI's membership is mainly white liberal and has operated out of the wealthier lakefront wards which have elected several independent Democrats to the City Council in recent years; hence the generic references to Washington's white vote as coming largely from the Lakefront liberals.

In Black wards on the South and West sides, community activists worked with less visibility but ultimately with more impact to challenge and finally to supplant the Regular Democratic Organizations in most of these wards. This is how independent ward organizations came to be led by progressive politicians like Aldermen Clifford Kelley and Danny Davis. These organizations were not built by passing out patronage and awarding other favors, since there weren't any to dispense. These are the poorer parts of the city. The Aldermen who have been elected in opposition to the machine and the racist distribution of city services and resources have worked hard to cultivate other sources of jobs for their unemployed constituents, but they have not been able to rely on passing out goodies as the wealthier and whiter wards have done. They have had to work in different ways to maintain a strong core of participation in the ward organization. In part they have tried to build precinct-based organizations which rely on political education and in part they have begun to develop the kind of social supports people need and appreciate (and which the machine relied on to develop its constituency as well). In Davis's ward, these include a big back-to-school parade and barbecue — run by the ward organization, not the Alderman's office — and softball games with other organizations.

CHANGE COMES TO THE 22nd WARD

The 22nd Ward gives a good idea of how this process has worked out lately. About 30 years ago the ward was largely Bohemian and is known as the Little Village. About 20% of the residents are older "white ethnics" who originally controlled the area. About 60% of the residents are Latino (mostly Mexican and Chicano) and 20% are Black, with the Black population concentrated in 7 precincts on the northern edge of the ward. However, it is startling to see that the actual vote is approximately 50% white, 30% Black, and 20% Latino. The proportion of registered voters is small (and that of Latinos particularly small); so its committeeman has the least weight of any in the Party Central Committee. The ward's independent organization is much younger than those of most of those in Black wards.

Washington received crucial support in Little Village and the other Latino (mainly Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Cuban) communities; it can certainly be argued that the Latino vote was the swing vote in his election. In Little Village, the organization which challenged the machine is called the 22nd Ward Independent Political Organization (IPO). During last year's mayoral election, 31-year-old IPO Rudy Lozano, regional co-

organizer for the ILGWU and community activist, was one of Washington's main Latino backers. Lozano and other activists, including his campaign manager Jesus Garcia, had been involved in community organizing for some time. They worked with community organizations like Por Un Barrior Mejor against neighborhood crime, drug problems, educational problems and so on. Under Lozano's banner, the IPO drew in

RUDY LOZANO



Un Hijo Del Pueblo

activists who reflected the composition of the 22nd ward: most of the campaign workers were working class, laborers or unemployed. A core of activists came with Lozano from a background of high school activism and the Chicano studies programs at the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois; some had been farmworkers or supporters of the farmworkers movement. Some had experiences in one or another Left organization such as CASA and in organizations in defense of immigrants' rights, and against Simpson-Mazzoli; the main common denominator among them is that of struggle against national oppression and racism. Lozano and his coworkers drew some of their impetus for electoral involvement from the campaign Juan Soliz had run for State Representative in neighboring Pilsen two years previously. Soliz came close to winning; and 22nd ward activists had done some work in his campaign and gotten a taste of success.*

In addition to the Latinos, Black activists came into the IPO through the Washington campaign, and brought with them a strong sense of the importance of independent organization. Their experience, which also drew on the history of struggle in majority Black wards, was essential to the construction and survival of the IPO, since it came more from a commitment to independent organization than from loyalty to a particular candidate.

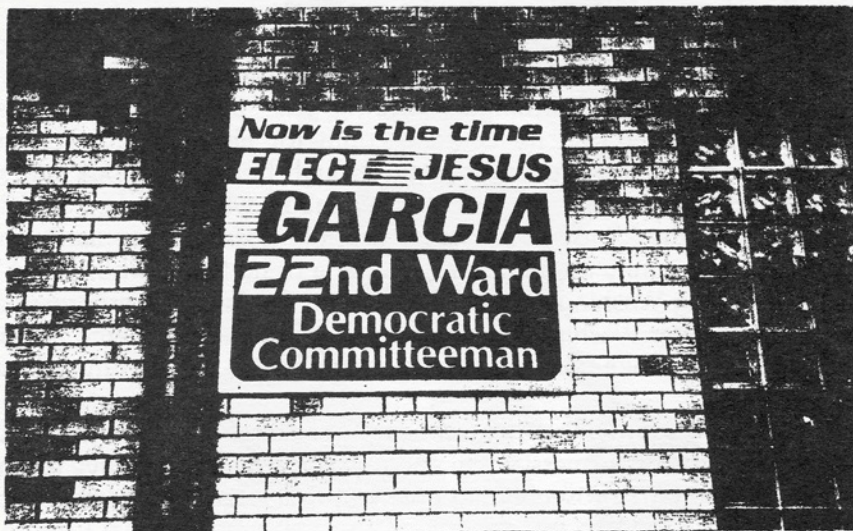
The IPO and Lozano came within 37 votes of forcing machine-backed incumbent Alderman and Committeeman Frank Stemberk into a runoff in the aldermanic race. Lozano worked hard for Washington during the primary, and Washington reciprocated; Lozano later said he could account for almost every Hispanic vote Washington received in the ward, votes won through house meetings and speaking dates. Black IPO members were the core of the rainbow which worked for Lozano as well as Washington in the 22nd ward. The 31-year-old Lozano's popularity and depth of support in the community made it clear he was a rising figure who would have an important place among Washington's advisers and in the future of progressive politics in the city. A month after Washington's election, Lozano was murdered in his kitchen as his two-year-old son looked on. 5000 people marched in a silent funeral procession to honor him.

Although a young gang member named Gregory Escobar was recently convicted of Lozano's murder after a controversial trial and one hung jury, the motive for the killing was never made clear. One prosecution theory was that Lozano was killed because he had involved Escobar's rivals in the election. (Others commented that Lozano was interested in getting as many people as possible into the electoral process and into community activity. This is reminiscent of how the Panthers were able to politicize some gang members during their heyday in the Black communities, though Lozano's style and message were different.) Jesus Garcia frequently reminds audiences outside the

*Soliz, a progressive young Legal Aid Foundation attorney, ran again this year, and won his primary against a particularly distasteful machine candidate. After a court battle over contested ballots Soliz was declared the primary victor by 18 votes.

ward of the IPO's concern for justice for Lozano, and its commitment to his goals, and points out that the changes within the ward have threatened each of the major forces of reaction there: organized crime, the machine, exploiters of undocumented workers. Within the community, there is still dissatisfaction with how Lozano's murder was handled by various police and state agencies, and the feeling is that they weren't especially interested in finding out what really happened. Lozano wasn't the first activist murdered in the Latino communities. His death left a big hole in the fabric of anti-machine, pro-equality political struggle in the 22nd Ward.

Lozano's successes prior to his murder and the growth of the 22nd Ward IPO confronted supporters with the issue of the IPO's relationships to the coming Committeeman elections in April of 1984. Lozano had done well running against Stemberk for Alderman; certainly Stemberk could be beaten for Committeeman? Twenty-six-year-old Jesus Garcia became President of the IPO and chair of the citizens' committee which worked to pressure the police and the city to investigate Lozano's murder. He had managed Washington's campaign in the 22nd ward in the general election following Lozano's narrow loss in the primary. Garcia became the candidate for Committeeman.



Despite Lozano's death, and drawing inspiration from his memory, the IPO grew stronger in the year after the Mayoral elections. It had another year of experience and organizing time in the community; it had the moral impetus of avenging Lozano's murder; and it could benefit from a general shift in the city's political climate, which particularly favored greater independent strength in the oppressed nationality wards of the city. It could expect some assistance from veterans of the Washington campaign. Garcia himself had a year to begin to grow into the job of replacing Rudy Lozano.

PROGRESSIVES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

One of the IPO's problems in running a candidate for Committeeman was how to define its relationship to the Democratic party. This was less an issue before the election, because many people didn't care too much about what office Stemberk was running for in this election, as long as he got beat. (In fact, highly informal surveys indicated that people weren't exactly sure which office was involved in the election.) This was also mirrored in the difficulties which Garcia initially had in expressing what he planned to do with the office if elected.

But in the course of about 6 months spent planning for the Committeeman elections once the decision was made to run, Garcia and his supporters in the IPO began to put together a platform for the office, which evolved into something of an Alderman-in-Exile concept. The extensive organizing within the ward, and support from Washington (both through campaign appearances and assistance in staffing the campaign office) paid off; Garcia beat Stemberk and one other rival by about 50 votes, and has been seated as the 22nd Ward Democratic Party Committeeman.

It is probably fair to say that more questions have been raised by the election than settled by it. For example, what will the ongoing relationship be between the IPO and the Democratic Party? This will inevitably take some time to work out. At a membership meeting soon after the election, the IPO decided not to change its name to something which would reflect a relationship to the Democratic Party, choosing instead to maintain the more independent identity expressed in its current name. Within the IPO, there are views which range from mainly negative to more positive about ties to the Democratic Party. The IPO has drawn in a variety of members as it has become somewhat more established and credible over the last couple of years, so that this ambivalence reflects a range of political sophistication and philosophies within it.

One participant explained the various tendencies and views in the IPO this way: First, there are a number of IPO organizers who want to do traditional kinds of community work, like organizing block clubs and anti-crime marches, and to them electoral issues are relatively secondary and the Democratic party not that significant. It was important to them that the organization decided to keep the IPO name and not just become the new Democratic organization in the ward. Others think that the organization should move further into the Democratic Party. There is some tightrope walking involved here. No one, regardless of where they fall within this spectrum, wants to put Garcia on the spot; maybe, some believe, it is too great a conflict for him to remain president of the IPO given his job as Committeeman, but there is no one else who can do the job — no Latino who has the support to be president of the IPO right now.

Then there are relative newcomers (even relative to Garcia and the other young activists) who have been brought into the electoral process through community organizing and because of their support for Lozano as a Latino leader. For a lot of people this is their first political involvement. They aren't sure what the difference is between the IPO and the Regular Democrats, and aren't sure how important the difference might

be anyway. They don't have a critique of the Democratic Party, and are serious about having joined the IPO and paid their \$5.00. So they may consider themselves independent, but Democrats even so. It will take more experience, and more IPO involvement in electoral activity, to work through these various perspectives. Undoubtedly, the IPO's stance in relationship to the Democratic Party will shift as the climate in the Party changes, both in the city of Chicago and nationally.

In addition, the future of the IPO as an organization is itself not a firmly settled matter. It has generally proven difficult to sustain progressive organizations which are based on electoral work, and the IPO is casting around for solutions to the problem of maintaining participation, discussion and activity in between elections and when the issues have a less direct bearing on the daily lives of the people involved. It has not proven easy to collect this year's dues from last year's members, or to maintain attendance at meetings. There has been a stable core of activists which has helped to keep the IPO functioning; key among them is Lupe Lozano, Rudy's widow, who is a strong force in the ward in her own right.

In a way, Garcia is using the office as other committeemen have done over the years, except that he can't provide much in the way of patronage jobs.* In other words, people call up the office to get garbage cans, to arrange for city support for block clean-ups, and so on. It is a big step forward for the 22nd Ward to have any elected official (even if it's a party, not a governmental, official) who will pay attention to these requests for the most rudimentary municipal city services. The office is seen in the community as a service center, and even if he wanted to, Garcia could not move too far from this role. This also continues to confuse people about any distinction between the Alderman's and the Committeeman's jobs, since most people look at the office in terms of how it directly affects them, and not in the more remote sense of who votes which way on various municipal ordinances. Such confusion can be expected to work in Garcia's favor when he runs for Alderman in 3 years (or next year, if he and others are successful in forcing new elections as a result of an appellate court ruling that several wards have been gerrymandered to exclude Latino political influence, and thus that ward boundaries must be redrawn.)

* Garcia and another Latino activist recently were appointed by the Mayor to lucrative jobs in city government. Garcia just became a deputy commissioner in the Water Department for \$51,108 per year. Presumably these jobs are political appointments included in the 1700 jobs exempted from court-ordered limitations on political hiring and firing. Popular sentiment in the ward seems to be that it was essential for Washington to make these appointments and bring progressive Hispanic leaders into city administration. Garcia does have a relatively insignificant (compared to the old days) amount of patronage, such as summer jobs for youth, and there has been some debate about how to allocate them. The view which has prevailed holds that these jobs are really redress for how the area's residents were systematically discriminated against in city hiring in the past, and that they should go to residents and supporters on that basis.

The way elections are structured in Chicago, there is usually one on the horizon or just over it. This should help in sustaining the IPO. If it can stabilize its membership and solve its immediate problems, the IPO has developed as a long-range goal working to develop a ward council, like a community council, that would deal with issues facing the Democratic Party but also to deal with community issues. It would select delegates to county party committee meetings but would also help constitute block clubs, and so on. Part of the IPO program involves encouraging residents to become citizens, so that long-time area residents will be able to be a more effective political force. In addition, Garcia stresses the importance of building a strong anti-Reagan vote in the ward based on house meetings which would underscore what Reagan has meant and would mean most directly to the lives of those living in a poor, oppressed nationality ward: social services cutbacks, militarism, a hostile Supreme Court.

Despite the feeling (expressed by Garcia, at least) that progress was made at the Democratic convention in forcing the national leadership to acknowledge and make concessions to the Hispanic agenda — particularly on Simpson-Mazzoli — Garcia is unwilling to tie himself unconditionally to the Democratic Party. It is certainly clear in Chicago that the Regular organization is monumentally uninterested in conceding anything to democracy and political equality within the party.

Beyond this, there are questions about how to broaden the perspective of the IPO and its participants, and to fight against the insularity of the ward and many of its residents. The community is poor but very self-contained, as many ethnic neighborhoods (particularly those with large non-English speaking populations) tend to be. This is compounded by gerrymandering which was designed to keep the Latino population unregistered and to neutralize its Black population. Residents have responded by cooperating more than they might have otherwise. The Washington campaign was a major impetus for this cooperation. But beyond this, the ward's Black voters have a connection to electoral activity — through the traditions of the civil rights movement, Black voters' registration drives, and the independent tradition in the city's Black wards, that Latinos have not had, so that Black voters and activists have been essential in building and sustaining the IPO. In fact, one threat being brought against the independent movement in the ward is to redistrict the Black wards out of the 22nd and into the heavily Black 24th under the cover of correcting earlier inequities but with the goal of dealing a major blow to the progressive movement in the 22nd Ward. The ward's Black residents have supported Garcia and don't feel poorly represented because he's not Black. In the course of the campaign race generally has not been an issue, except for some problems with where to have public meetings that everyone feels comfortable attending.

But it is still difficult to keep people interested and informed about political struggles elsewhere in the city and in the country. Leftists in the IPO grappling with this problem have experimented with various solutions. One can be seen in Garcia's approach to building the anti-Reagan vote in Little Village. Another has been to bring out issues of international solidarity and to build on the support many residents have for liberation

movements in Central America. This was a reason for the IPO's sponsorship of a recent national tour by Nicaraguan health care workers, and also for its endorsement of the October 13 Freeze/No More Vietnams march. Activists try to use these endorsements to expand the discussion in the ward to political issues beyond problems with garbage collection and other city services, and immediate economic concerns like jobs. At their weakest, Left activists have been unable to get beyond doing rather straightforward electoral work and have confined their broader views to distributing their newspapers and trying to get people to events outside the ward held under the auspices of their newspapers.

Developments in the 22nd Ward are in their own way a microcosm of the fundamental changes taking place in Chicago politics, and thus raise some fundamental issues to activists. The answers are far from clear. It is clear that the Democratic Party will never be the same in the city. Any realignment in Democratic power relationships — especially in the political strength of oppressed nationalities — and the organizational forms the realignment takes at the grass-roots level, will deserve close attention.

—Peggy Baker
August 1984

Mobilizing Students to Fight Reagan

The November 6 elections and the struggle to prevent the re-election of Ronald Reagan has emerged as the key factor now shaping the student movement. Quite literally, campuses across the U.S. are experiencing a wave of activism as diverse groups of organizers move into action to give the Reagan administration its walking papers this fall.

A quick rundown of some of the work that has already been done illustrates the scope of this activity. On many campuses, relatively intense voter registration drives have been carried out. One such drive in Amherst, Mass., netted 4000 new voters. The United States Student Association launched "Freedom Summer '84" this past June—an effort to mobilize students for voter registration on a national scale. In California, Students Against Reagan (STAR) has built a substantial state-wide organization to take aim at Reagan and Reaganism.

GOOD WORK IN MADISON

Madison, Wisc., has been the scene of extensive work along these lines. Last April a group of students from the Progressive Student Network (PSN) who had worked on the Jesse Jackson Campaign decided it was necessary to build the fight against Reagan on campus. A broad call was issued to "run the Reagan gang out of town" (accompanied by a graphic depicting Reagan and company as outlaws) and more than 30 students responded by coming to an anti-Reagan strategy meeting. This was the beginning of Madison's Anti-Reagan Coalition.

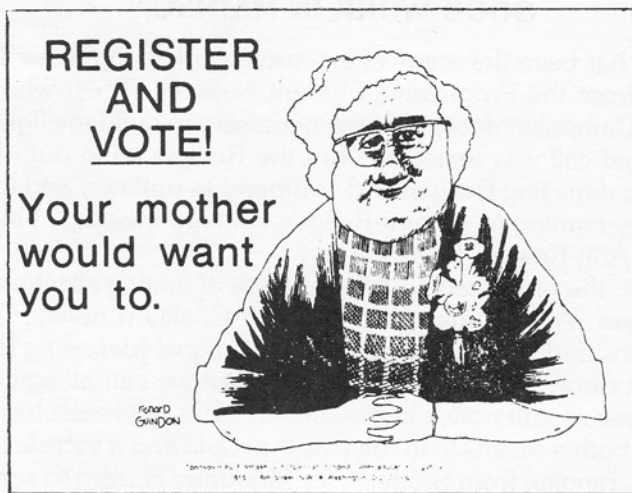
From jump street, the organizers had the outlook of uniting all who can be united for the defeat of Reagan. A brochure put out by the Coalition noted: "Many of us may have different means and strategies in achieving this goal [defeating Reagan]. And we may not be able to resolve all of our differences. But we can *all* agree on the need to give Reagan his three month notice in November." This approach has led to the Coalition functioning as both a means to involve new people and a vehicle for the coalescing of different forces—ranging from Students for Mondale/Ferraro to some of the Central American Solidarity organizations.

The work that the Madison Anti-Reagan Coalition has done this past summer laid the basis for this organization to emerge as a substantial force in the campus' political life this fall. A summer educational series on topics like U.S. intervention in the third world and the need to defeat Reagan was successful. In addition some good literature and fact sheets have been used. This educational work is important. Anti-Reagan work is not only a question of mobilizing the students who are already down on him; exposure and education geared towards those students who are confused about the role

that the Reagan administration has played is essential. In the fall this need will become more pronounced when a host of Young Republicans student Reagan/Bush committees come into being.

One of the more exciting events that the Coalition has in the works is a "Rock Against Reagan" festival which organizers expect will draw several thousand people. Timed to take place during registration week, this event is designed to broaden participation in anti-Reagan work and help galvanize public opinion against Reaganism. In the course of making "Rock Against Reagan" happen, close attention has been paid to building political ties that will be useful in future anti-Reagan work.

Three other points can be drawn out of Madison's anti-Reagan work. First, is the need to carry out voter registration throughout the course of activity. The only way that Reagan is going to be turned out of office this fall is via electoral means. Second is the need to pay close attention to organizational work. This means building up a core, and developing methods to systematically mobilize the advanced. The Anti-Reagan Coalition has consistently had 25 people at each of its organizational meetings, and has developed a mailing/phone list with several hundred more. Finally, it is key to have a correct take on Mondale. This means telling people to vote for him while stressing the anti-Reagan side of the work. Many students are aware that Mondale is not so hot; relatively little enthusiasm can be generated for his candidacy beyond beating Reagan.



DEFEATING REAGAN — THE KEY TASK

This past August the Student Commission of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters met in part to sum up the electoral work that has been done on campus, to deepen our analysis of the elections, and to plan some work for the fall. The Commission united around making work to defeat Ronald Reagan our central task between now and Nov. 6. Briefly summarized, the following conclusions were drawn;

Stop Reagan: While in the final analysis the contradiction between Reagan and Mondale is a contradiction among the enemy, we are going to work for Reagan's defeat because of the special danger he represents to the American people and the people of the world, the mass sentiment and motion that exists on campus for stopping him, and because beating Reagan will help to create a more favorable political climate for progressive and revolutionaries to operate in.

Not the same: We examined and rejected the view that Mondale and Reagan are essentially the same. They are not. Sure, Mondale is miles and miles away from being a people's candidate, as the treatment of the Jackson forces at the Democratic Convention amply shows. But between the two there are differences that are going to have a real effect on what the world looks like for the next four years. Also, in American politics today government officials are elected based on the alignment of forces in society. No central committee of the ruling class organizes elections as a shell game to fool people. Instead competing sections of the ruling class and the candidates with ties to them cut deals and make alliances with different forces. The forces that have aligned themselves around the Reagan administration are more consolidated than those in the Mondale camp and have committed themselves to a program that is worse than Mondale's. If they were the same, or if the differences were unimportant we wouldn't be doing this work.



Unity: It is important to build the anti-Reagan struggle broadly. This means working with Democratic party pro-Mondale forces, mobilizing the masses of students while paying attention to the needs and questions of students new to political activity, and uniting with the different movements on campus.

The Movements: It is important for activists in the different movements on campuses (anti-intervention, etc.) to build anti-Reagan activity and when applicable to make sure that an anti-Reagan thrust is present in the work.

Abstentionism: While abstentionism stemming from ultra-leftism has declined somewhat over the past year, patient and consistent work will still have to be done to oppose ideas like "why vote for the lesser of two evils." This is particularly true in Central America work. Also the mass cynicism (i.e. "all politicians are the same") will have to be worked against.

MAKE THE FALL COUNT

By all indications the student movement will take a number of steps forward this fall by building the fight against Reagan. By doing so the student movement will make a contribution to the overall struggle of the American people.

A number of events are in the works that will build the campus struggle and assist the fight against Reagan and Reaganism. One of the most promising is the conference of the Progressive Student Network scheduled for Oct. 6 and 7 in Philadelphia. Last year the Network showed its ability to build student activism, by helping to organize the campus response to the Grenada invasion. This year the theme of the conference is "Rewrite the Script-Defeat Reagan and Reaganism in 1984." This conference will be an important place for activists from a wide range of student struggles to gather and lay plans for the crucial closing month of the elections. The conference will provide a valuable vehicle for students to exchange experience in this effort and discuss strategies for different movements. One of the proposals that is now under discussion in the PSN is for a week of actions that will demonstrate student opposition to Reagan and Reaganism. Also under discussion is a plan for day after the election actions.

We will close with the Madison Anti-Reagan Coalition's good summary of the road ahead. "So our tasks are clear. Get out the vote against Reagan, educate and agitate against militarism and war, and voice the demands for peace and social justice here and throughout the world."

—August, 1984

This article is largely based on a discussion held at the most recent meeting of the student commission of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters.

The Kiss of Death

A one act play written for the Not Ready For Reagan Players

Presidential Aide (A): Mr. President, Mr. President, wake up. I have some horrible news for your. Our spy in the politburo, has just informed us that they intend to endorse you next week and recommend to the American people that they vote for you.

Reagan (R): They can't be serious. What reasons did they give?

A: Well sir, they seem to think that your firm position on nuclear superiority has done more to make them appear reasonable to the European Community than their propaganda machine has been able to do in years. They say that TASS doesn't even have to quote you out of context anymore. In addition your aid to the contras in Nicaragua has assured them that the Sandinistas will not be able to maintain a non-aligned model and instead will soon be coming to them for aid and arms.

R: But what about Grenada; we really showed the Russians there.

A: They admit that Grenada was unfortunate, but it gave them a good comeback when people mention Afghanistan.

R: Oh my god, this is the kiss of death. My popularity will plummet, the New Right will abandon me.

A: Yes sir. Our polls indicate that you will lose much of your conservative support.

R: Won't I pick up Democrats?

A: Not really. You've been so successful that the Democrats are all mimicking your rhetoric. Why the last time Mondale mentioned the word "Freeze" he was at an ice cream manufacturers convention talking to a five foot tall sherbert.

R: I've got to do something to show the Americans that the Russians are not my friends. Quick, call off all summit meetings with the Russians.

A: But sir, we don't have any meetings scheduled with them.

R: I knew they were sneaky. How about embargoes?

A: Sir, you're currently attacking Mondale for imposing embargoes under the Carter administration.

R: Well we'll just have to bomb them then. That should show the Russians that I'm no friend of theirs.

A: Yes sir it certainly would. However, our pollsters show that the political repercussions might be a bit too severe and endanger your ability to carry some of the southern states. Unless of course we could get the Russians to agree to retaliate by only bombing New York and Massachusetts. Unfortunately our feelers indicate they are not likely to stop there.

R: I always knew they were an unreasonable people. Well what if we threaten to bomb them?

A: That might work sir, but it would have to appear as a joke, otherwise it might cost us too many votes.

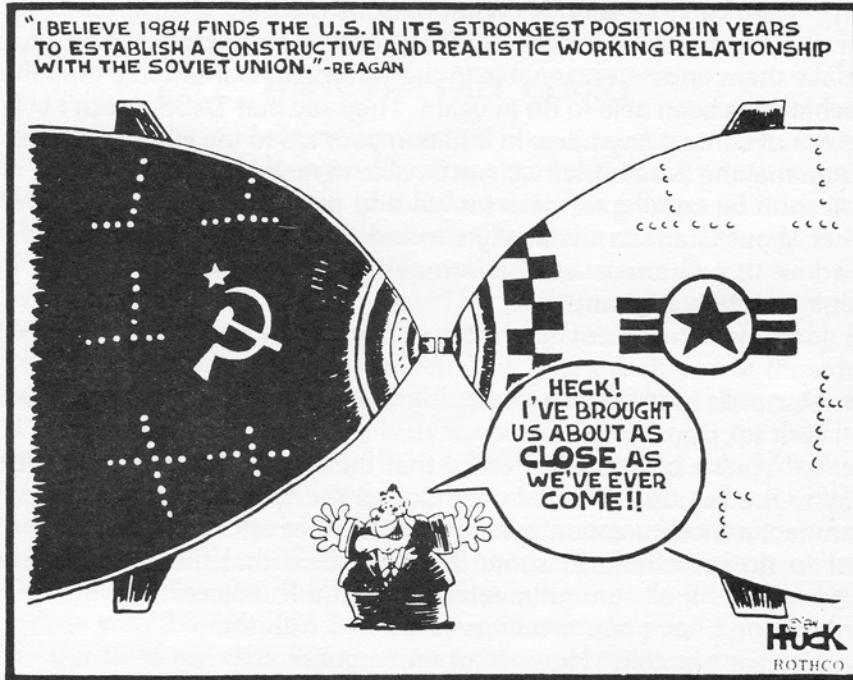
R: That's what I'll do then. I've always been a great joker. I'll just slip it into my next political speech.

A: That would be your weekly radio show tomorrow sir.

R: No problem, did our spy tell us anything else?

A: Yes, he said that the Russians held high hopes for the Republican Party, what with Jack Kemp and Newt Gingrich waiting in the wings.

—Arvid Muller



Revolution and Democracy: The Elections in Nicaragua 1984

One of the first things that strikes a visitor to Nicaragua in August 1984 is that an election campaign is in progress. From the scrawled graffiti on every street corner, to banners and posters hung from windows or pasted on doors, to the huge billboards that line the larger avenues and highways, it is evident that this campaign is reaching into every barrio from the cities to the rural co-ops in the most remote areas of the country.

"SEGUIMOS DE FRENTE CON EL FRENTE" (We are going to the front with the Front) with a red and black splash of color is the slogan of the FSLN which contends for attention with that of the PPSC, "Christians to Power", and the Communist Party of Nicaragua's hammer and sickle. In all, seven political parties are participating in the elections. 1.5 million people (out of a total population of 3 million) were registered to vote in 4 days in July! The Nicaraguan people are ready for their first real experience with democracy.

But what do these elections mean in the context of the Sandinista revolution? Will the electoral process help to consolidate the power of the workers and peasants who ousted Somoza 5 years ago under the leadership of the FSLN? What are the effects of the US-backed contra war on the elections?

I had the opportunity to view this process firsthand for 10 days in August as part of a study tour to Nicaragua, and to meet with both leaders of the opposition parties and representatives of the Sandinista government. This article does not offer a complete analysis of the Nicaraguan elections or the FSLN program, but hopefully will provide useful information that may help *FM* readers to understand their importance. As leftists who are just beginning to utilize the electoral arena of struggle in our own country, there are things to learn from the Nicaraguan example.

A LITTLE HISTORY . . .

The elections which will take place on November 4 are not the first in Nicaraguan history. Throughout the 40 years that the Somoza family ruled Nicaragua elections were held. But they took place in an atmosphere of brutal National Guard repression and terror. The constitution was regularly amended to allow the Somozas to hold one or more term in office and the US Marines were always lurking in the background, ready to back up this "democracy."

When the popular insurrection brought the Sandinistas to power in 1979, they committed themselves to holding elections as part of a platform of political pluralism, a mixed economy and a non-aligned foreign policy. This commitment was repeated by the FSLN in 1980 when they set the date for elections for 1985 because the "back-

wardness and the economic, social and moral destruction of the country (are) so deep and extensive that we cannot hope to achieve reconstruction before 1985." At that time, the FSLN defined the purpose of elections in this way; elections "to improve revolutionary power but not to vie for the possession of it."

And on February 21, 1984, Daniel Ortega, co-ordinator of the Junta, announced that elections would take place on November 4 of this year to pick a president and a vice-president by popular vote, and a 90-member constituent assembly by proportional representation. The decision to hold the elections two days before our own ensures that Nicaragua will have an elected government in place to deal with whatever our own election results may bring.

THE ELECTORAL PROCESS . . .

A brief description of the electoral law itself, the process of the campaign and the role of the FSLN and the other parties may provide further insight into the relationship between these elections and the Nicaraguan ongoing revolutionary transformation.

There are seven political parties participating in the elections. A law passed in 1983 gave these parties legal status for the first time in Nicaraguan history. The three most right-wing parties, known as the Co-ordinadora and headed by Arturo Cruz, removed themselves from the running as of August 22 when they failed to meet the conditions for inscription. They had demanded a "national dialogue" with the contras prior to the elections and international supervision, conditions which the other parties rejected. The three can still function as legal organizations but have lost their charter. Opposition forces range from the small MAP/ML and CP on the left, to the "loyal opposition" of the Liberal Independent Party (PLI) and the Socialist Party, to several parties on the right. The law provides all parties with equal access to state and private communications media during the campaign. All types of rallies and demonstrations may be held. (We attended one in a barrio in Managua where FSLN candidates were being introduced to the neighborhood.) It is a crime to destroy the propaganda of any of the parties, to give campaign "gifts" or encourage vice, to personally denigrate any of the candidates, or to publicly advocate abstention or boycotting. (The Sandinistas take these laws quite seriously: almost 15 minutes of the speech we heard at the campaign rally was devoted to cautioning people against campaign "excesses" that had been occurring because of the eagerness and militancy of FSLN supporters).

Voter registration, which is mandatory, took place in July after a massive educational campaign. We saw voter registration posters of all types absolutely everywhere. In one controversial change, the vote was extended to all Nicaraguans who have reached 16 years of age. The reasoning here was that the participation of Nicaraguan youth in the revolution had brought an accelerated maturing process. At the Miraflores Co-operative near Esteli I met Sara who will be 16 on November 1st and thus able to vote, which was the first thing she proudly told me after we had exchanged names. Her 14 year old friend, Lygia would not be able to vote, though she admitted to being tempted to lie and register anyway. Her mother told me: "I have three younger daugh-

ters — 13, 14 and 15 — they all want to vote. In the old days, during Somoza, everyone registered and if you voted for the right person — well, you might get a little extra land to work. But now, I think it would be wrong — I wouldn't let them register." Throughout Nicaragua we met young boys and girls — ten and eleven year olds even — who claimed to be 15 in order to join the militia and defend the country. I was struck by the fact that in Nicaragua young people lie about their age to vote or to participate in national defense, while their North American counterparts seek fake IDs to go out drinking!



Como buenos Nicaragüenses

RECORDEMOS LAS REGLAS DEL JUEGO



LEGALIDAD

Los partidos políticos inscritos en el Consejo Supremo Electoral son los únicos autorizados para realizar propaganda electoral y deberán contribuir al estricto cumplimiento de la ley, en todo lo relacionado con esta actividad





IGUALDAD

Los partidos políticos inscritos ante este Consejo, así como sus candidatos, deberán desarrollar su propaganda electoral y sus actuaciones dentro de un marco de respeto al derecho ajeno y a la dignidad del ser humano. En los medios de comunicación deberán aplicarse el principio de igualdad de condiciones para la propaganda de los diferentes partidos.



RESPECTO

Cada partido político inscrito tiene la obligación de respetar y no dañar la propaganda de los demás, así como los monumentos, edificios públicos y templos, en los cuales es prohibido fijar mantas, pancartas, banderas, carteles, dibujos, afiches, pintas y cualquier otro medio de propaganda. En los bienes inmuebles deben solicitarse autorizaciones de sus habitantes para fijar, mantas, carteles y pancartas.



ETICA

Los partidos políticos y los medios de comunicación social, no deberán usar términos ofensivos o denigrantes, en contra de los candidatos legalmente registrados y sus familias; lo mismo en contra de la propaganda de otros partidos políticos inscritos en el Consejo Supremo Electoral. Tampoco se deben distribuir obsequios que comprometan el voto ciudadano, ni estimular los vicios.



CONSEJO SUPREMO ELECTORAL

Respeto y garantía del voto popular

WHY ELECTIONS AT ALL . . .

We asked this question of representatives of the Council of State, the current national governing body, and received a simple and direct response: because of our commitment to the people of Nicaragua. At first, this didn't satisfy us. Most North Americans, including many on the left, are under the impression that the elections are somehow a "concession" to Reagan. Reagan, meanwhile, has branded the elections as a "sham Soviet-style farce." We often heard Nicaraguans comment that the only way Reagan will think that the elections are fair is if the Sandinistas lose. But, although the *timing* of the elections was undoubtedly a tactical move to deal with the escalation of aggression on the part of the Reagan regime, the electoral process is very much part of the ongoing consolidation of the revolution in Nicaragua.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE REVOLUTION . . .

The governmental system and the overall direction of social transformation is not at stake in the Nicaraguan elections. The present electoral process cannot allow for the return of the prerevolutionary system for to do so would be to ignore the pattern of history and trample on the aspirations of the majority of the people. The mass organizations such as the CDS (Sandinista Defense Committees), AMNLAE (the Women's Association), and the CST (Sandinista Labor Federation) are well-represented on the slate of FSLN candidates. Even the opposition estimates that the FSLN will win from 70-80% of the vote. The most positive outcome will be that the elections will ratify a new consensus in the country and present to the international community a legitimate revolutionary state. This is most important to the social democracies in Western Europe who are providing the largest amount of material aid for Nicaraguan reconstruction.

Socialism by decree is not on the agenda in Nicaragua. In fact, only the Labor Federation puts forward the slogan "Building Socialism, we follow the Frente." What is on the agenda in 1984 is National Defense against US aggression and consolidation and defense of the gains of the revolution in agrarian reform, education, health and workers' control over production. The FSLN won its role as vanguard of the popular struggle through a strategy of maintaining the broadest possible unity and carefully balanced alliances as well as its demonstrated ability to lead the armed struggle against the dictatorship. The elections represent a continuation of that strategy.

US INTERVENTION AND THE ELECTIONS . . .

Secretary of State Schultz made the US position clear from the very beginning. On February 22, the day after the elections were announced, he stated: "With or without elections, we will continue our policy of pressuring Nicaragua."

"Pressuring" is an extremely mild way of describing the terrible effects of the US backed contra war in Nicaragua. Kidnappings and murder of civilians, burning of

crops, schools and health centers, have created the feeling of war even in areas far from the actual front. We visited a small shoe factory and a honey farm which were heavily guarded as possible contra targets. Food shortages and a deterioration in services such as transportation and communication were evident and the need for a military draft has created some uneasiness. The greatest fear, of course, is that Reagan's re-election would mean a US invasion.

But there is a more particular kind of terror which has been escalated this month, directed at the elections. On September 5 in Bluefields, Nicaragua on the Atlantic Coast, Mr. Ray Hooker, a candidate for the legislature on the FSLN slate was kidnapped by contras while campaigning among the rural Indians. We had met with Mr. Hooker only a week before this incident. Since then, 39 other civilian kidnappings have been reported. This is a psychological campaign designed to terrorize and intimidate those who support the Sandinistas.

These continued military attacks give Nicaragua every right, under a U.N. pact, to suspend the elections. But in spite of all the problems, Nicaragua remains committed to completing the process that it has begun.

We too have elections in November and many problems lie ahead for us in mapping out a strategy to defeat Ronald Reagan. If we can learn from the Nicaraguans the ability to build the broadest possible unity and forge alliances without sacrificing our revolutionary principles we will have learned a lot.

—Elena Gensler
September, 1984

Sources:

Black, George. *Triumph of the People: The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua*. Zed Press, London, 1981.

Envio, Instituto Historico Centroamericano, Managua, Nicaragua, Ano 3, Numero 34.

Save Mila Aguilar

On August 6th, Filipina poet, teacher, and activist Mila Aguilar was arrested with two others in the Philippines. Family members who live in Connecticut are extremely concerned for her safety, since standard operating procedure for opponents of the Marcos dictatorship has included torture, disappearance and death.

Your cablegram is needed *today*, to make sure the Philippine military understands that public attention is being focused on the arrest of Mila Aguilar.

To send a cable, call Western Union. They will bill your phone number; cost is 34¢ per word. Address cables to: President Ferdinand Marcos, Manila, Philippines, and Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, U.S. Embassy, Manila, Philippines. We need to press for: 1) Human treatment for Mila Aguilar; 2) Access to press and other visitors; and 3) Dropping of charges and release of Mila Aguilar. *Sign* your name or the name of your organization.

We hope to provide background to this case in our next issue of *Forward Motion*, but action is necessary now. For more information contact Friends of Filipino People (203) 429-0007 or 486-3631.

Send Your Cable Now

Labor Notes in 1984: Solidarity Now?

The Labor Notes Conference, held June 14-16 in Ypsilanti, Michigan attracted over 600 unionists from 52 unions and 8 countries. Speakers at the opening panel and the Plenary session included Bennet Harrison, co-author of the *Deindustrialization of America*, Fred Dube of the African National Congress, Bruce Boyens, Organizer for the United Mine Workers, Jane Slaughter of *Labor Notes* and others. An impressive selection of workshops, 37 in all, covered the gamut of issues facing the labor movement. Two Black caucus meetings, a Women's caucus and numerous meetings by geographical region and union affiliation were also held.



The theme selected by conference organizers, "Building Union Solidarity" was reflected in the topics covered in the Plenary and most notably in a proposal for a Solidarity Network. To launch this Solidarity Network, participants were urged to return home to organize local strike support committees. For the conference organizers at least, the strike support initiatives already undertaken for Greyhound workers and in local strikes in Toledo and Boston indicated that this was an idea whose time had come. Nationally, network proponents pointed to "corporate campaigns" which "brought a number of unions together to deal with management at the level of the whole corporation notably at Litton and General Dynamics." Internationally they spoke of the "worldwide Coca Cola boycott and strikes by the International Union of Food and Allied Workers Associations (IUF) which "brought about the return victory by the Guatemalan Coke workers factory occupation." The Network would not "substitute for the official organization and channels of the labor movement," but its proponents see a "place for the sort of catalytic action that sometimes brings official support in its trail."

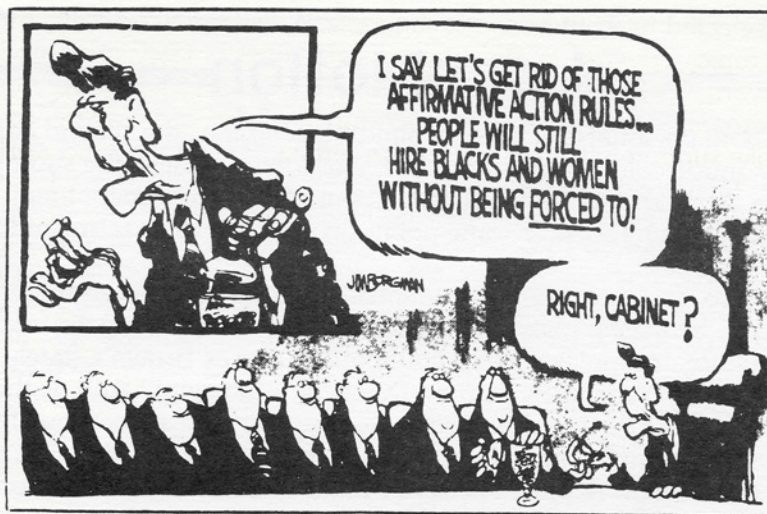
The actual support for this proposal among conference participants is unclear at this time. Proponents of the Network gave a ballpark estimate of \$27,000—\$34,000 that was needed for staff and other expenses. Presumably contributions would be forthcoming from conference participants and *Labor Notes* supporters. In the June issue of *Labor Notes*, immediately following the conference, editor J. Woodward describes these as "ambitious long term plans." For the moment, Woodward reports, they will begin a new column in LN on solidarity work and stay in touch with local activists by phone.

Whether or not the Solidarity Network takes off, the selection of "Building Union Solidarity" as the conference theme left no room in the opening and Plenary session for other themes. Two other themes undoubtedly would have been more controversial, but they are of greater weight and immediacy.

The Black caucus meeting, attended by approximately 50 conference participants printed a summary of their discussions. The last point they make is particularly relevant to the issue of "Solidarity":

The slogan An Injury to One is an Injury to All must be seen not only in light of contract violations or negotiations struggle, but must be extended to issues of racial and sexual discrimination. Taking up these issues will strengthen the entire labor movement.

The defense of affirmative action and superseniority in the face of attacks is a case in point but it received scant attention in the conference-wide sessions. The issue of superseniority, or dual seniority with regards to layoffs, is a controversial one among *Labor Notes* supporters—not to mention the labor movement as a whole. It is too important to be left simmering in an Affirmative Action workshop where those already in agreement tend to gather. The Plenary should have been open to an effective advocate of affirmative action and superseniority. The picket line is not the only place for building solidarity.



Another major issue of Labor in '84 which never made the *Labor Notes* opening session or Plenary agenda was the elections. Not one speaker addressed the '84 elections, either to criticize, endorse or propose an alternative to the AFL-CIO position. Aside from the obligatory 1½ hour workshop on the '84 elections, an Ad Hoc group, Labor for Jackson was permitted to set up a literature table and show a video tape outside the main hall. A crowd was nearly always gathered around the small monitor to see and hear Jessie Jackson assail corporate greed and union busting. He was speaking at a plant gate rally of locked out workers in Rahway, NJ, and yes, he walked in line with the workers of Merck Pharmaceuticals. I know. I was there too. Days later I wondered, would Jackson have spoken to the conference? He might have, if he was asked. Unfortunately that video tape in the hallway was as close as this conference came to the election issue.

In short, this *Labor Notes* conference, which like earlier ones, gathered together a fairly large group of union activists, marked the beginning of what may be a major thrust for strike support and related solidarity work. But the other story of this conference was what was left unsaid, the debate that was not held and the big questions that never got out of the workshop ghettos.

—J.H.
August 1984

LocoMotion

Mini-crises both personal and political almost k.o.ed this, the second edition of Forward Motion's music column, now entitled LocoMotion. As it is, the short piece which follows is here as much for continuity as content. Next time, LocoMotion will look at something a little loftier, probably some points on rock and roll, racism and the national question.

For the last two decades, every Presidential elections has offered rock and roll fans little highlights — actually it's been mainly lowlights — illuminating the relationship between mass culture and politics. Who could forget James Brown's stately embrace of Nixon (so different in style from Sammy Davis, Jr.'s fawning)? And as the "music industry" loomed larger in the U.S. economy, the key role played by Phil Walden's Capricorn Records empire in Jimmy Carter's long drive for the '76 nomination?

This being the election issue of Forward Motion, I'd like to comment on two recent events with a decidedly electoral slant. The first took place as University of Wisconsin students returned to Madison for registration procedures, nobody's idea of a good time. This fall they were gratified to find that the Anti-Reagan Coalition (see the article on page) had organized a free outdoor Rock Against Reagan concert on the mall. Over 4,000 students came by to listen and dance as speakers from campus groups were interspersed with bands, among them the Swamp Things and the hardcore Tar Babies, as well as local folkies.

The Rock Against Reagan theme has been around since 1980, inspired by the historic Rock Against Racism movement which exploded with the punk upsurge in England in the late '70s. This concert, however, was not just a general protest against the crimes of the administration, but a key step in a planned campaign to mobilize the maximum possible Anti-Reagan vote in the Madison area. The immediate results speak for themselves: 20 organizations, ranging from Central America solidarity groups to Students for Mondale set up literature tables and were surprised and pleased by the response they got. Over 150 new voters were registered. A similar number of Rock Against Reagan tee shirts were sold.

Even more important was the impetus this kickoff program gave to the fall campaign the Anti-Reagan Coalition is planning. Hundreds signed the Coalition contact sheet. People in the core group which slaved to the point of burnout to put the concert together were revived and their forces augmented by other activists. And a tone was set for returning students and especially freshpersons that the struggle to dump Reagan is going to have a lot to do with life on campus this semester.

Okay, you say, this is fine, inspirational even, but it isn't news. Only the grimmest dogmatist about culture would try to deny that rock and roll can play a progressive role in the people's struggles and frequently does so.¹

But the other event gives us an interesting look at the social role played by rock and roll from a rather different vantage point. Many newspapers included in their Dallas

coverage of Republicans-running-rampant an odd little sidebar article. It seems that Brian Wilson, the damaged guiding genius of the Beach Boys, was busted for criminal trespass at the Republican Convention. Now, he wasn't there to protest. He wasn't even gate-crashing. He was the invited guest of some GOP bigwig, but security didn't like his looks and it was off to the slammer!

Let's step back a minute. In 1980 the Beach Boys were ardent George Bush backers in the Republican primaries, then supported the Reagan-Bush ticket, albeit less actively. (Look, I said Wilson's a little damaged.) And what did they get for their efforts? There was James Watt, of course. He pulled the plug on the Beach Boys' free appearance at a July Fourth bash in Washington, D.C. Explaining that they would attract a "bad element," he replaced them with Vegas slimester Wayne Newton.² To be sure, some of the brighter White House staffers realized just how damaging this could be. They hastened to defuse growing public ridicule with pap like quotes from Nancy Reagan about how much she adores "Little Deuce Coupe," coupled with off-the-record trashings of Watt as a jerk to the press. Well, it's 1984, Watt is long gone (knock wood), and one would assume the Republicans had learned their lesson. But lo and behold, there're the headlines: "Beach Boy In Convention Arrest!"

There appears to be a moral here: Beyond a doubt, rock and rollers can be reactionary, but there's something about rock and roll that reaction has enormous difficulty swallowing.

1. Hats off to internationalists Loudon Wainwright III and Van Morrison who are performing in London benefits for the striking British coal miners.

2. Notable among Newton's fans was the late Frank "Cigars" Piccolo of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Shortly after Piccolo was indicted in a blaze of publicity for purportedly attempting to "extort" huge sums from Newton and Lola Falana, he contracted an abrupt and fatal case of lead poisoning while standing in a phone booth on a Bridgeport street corner. The embarrassing legal proceedings subsequently faded away.

—Dennis O'Neil

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