



Hispanics flex political muscle

by Chuck Goodmacher

The Hispanic Caucus was the scene of one of the Democratic Convention's greatest controversies as delegates debated whether or not to abstain from voting on the first ballot as a protest against the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration bill. Only 35 of the 291 Hispanic delegates eventually abstained from the ballot, but the majority seemed in favor of the action only one day earlier. The reversal came about only after intense pressure from elected Hispanic officials and personal visits by Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro.

Hispanic leaders here in Oregon do not expect the controversy to adversely affect voter turnout in November by the state's largest minority community. The Hispanic Political Action Committee (HPAC) is working hard to turn out voters and volunteers for both local and national candidates this fall, said HPAC's Multnomah County Chair Reymundo Marin. Dr. Jose Guterrez of Polk County is the state's first Hispanic candidate for the state legislature.

HPAC and other Hispanic organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) are also keeping up the pressure on Oregon's congressional delegation to oppose any possible re-introduction of Simpson-Mazzoli this session. Marin said their efforts in this regard are focused on Congressman Jim Weaver (D-Eugene) who has voted in favor of the bill.

The move to abstain on the first ballot at the convention began with a call issued in June from LULAC National President Mario Obledo. Obledo urged the abstention on the first roll call "as a statement to the Democratic Party and to America...that we are very serious about killing Simpson-Mazzoli." Obledo and other dissident Hispanics sought commitments from House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Texas), House Speaker Tip O'Neill, (D-Mass.), and candidate Walter Mondale "assuring us that they will kill that piece of legislation. They have the power to do it."

The immigration bill, co-authored by Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyoming) and Rep. Romano Mazzoli (D-Kentucky), mandates penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants as workers, establishes

a guest-worker program, and legalizes immigrants now living illegally in the U.S.

Hispanics fear it will increase discrimination against them and other people who look or sound "foreign." Enrique Escobar of Portland's Hispanic Media Project said the bill shook the Hispanic community "at its very heart and soul."

The employer sanctions are the most vehemently opposed provision in the bill. Congressman Robert Garcia (D-New York) said during the caucus debate in San Francisco, "that is something we cannot afford. We know what discrimination is. We have lived it."

Reymundo Marin attacks the idea that immigration reform is possible in the U.S. without first changing foreign policies which contribute to the influx of immigrants from Latin America. Speaking on a recent cable news show, Marin said, "This movement of desperate people will continue to increase...as those countries become poorer and U.S. policies continue to foster an environment of political instability and economic stagnation. So it is foolish to assume," he continued, "that Simpson-Mazzoli will have a significant effect on the situation unless we confront the real problems. It is false and irresponsible to claim that this legislation is immigration reform."

Garcia and other Hispanic leaders including Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio, Texas; Congressman Edward Roybal (D-CA), and Colorado State Senator Polly Baca (who also serves as vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee) oppose Simpson-Mazzoli but urged against the move to abstain.

"Abstention will result in this—harming the man who has the best chance to be the nominee of this party and who has already said he is opposed to Simpson-Mazzoli," Cisneros said.

As late as one day before the balloting for the presidential nomination, it appeared the boycott might have succeeded. Domingo Garcia, a Jackson delegate from Dallas, said on Tuesday, July 17, "65% of the delegates support the boycott." The next day, Mondale and Ferraro attended the Hispanic Caucus meeting and renewed their opposition to the bill. Ferraro told the delegates, "I voted right (on Simpson-Mazzoli) because the bill is wrong, wrong, wrong."

(Since the convention, agribusiness, farmer and Chamber of Commerce opposition to the bill's sanctions against knowingly hiring illegal aliens has made Simpson-Mazzoli's future a cloudy one. The *Observer* will be reporting on any developments regarding the bill as they occur.)

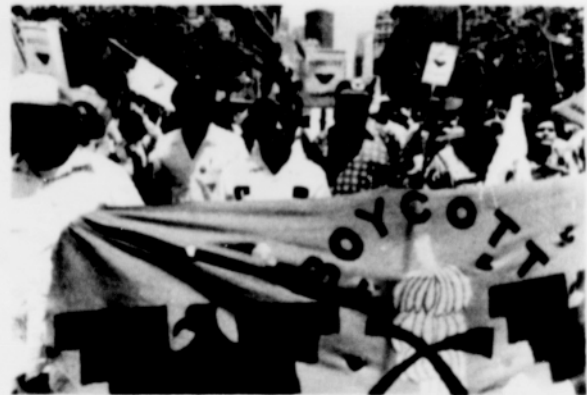


Mayor Henry Cisneros of San Antonio, Texas. (Photo: C. Goodmacher)

Rainbow plank on South Africa adopted in platform

The Democratic party will advocate a set of bold new initiatives for Third World nations in general and African in particular. Hunger, drought, and famine have brought untold suffering to millions in Africa. This human misery—and the armies of nationless—requires a policy of substantial increases in humanitarian assistance, a major thrust in agricultural technology transfer, and cessation of the unfortunate tendency to hold such aid hostage to East-West confrontation or other geopolitical aims. The United States also must offer substantially greater economic assistance to these nations, while engaging in a North-South multilateral dialogue that addresses mutual economic development strategies, commodities pricing, and other treaties relevant to international trade. A Democratic president will join with our friends within and outside the continent in support of full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all African states. Africa is the home of one-eighth of the world's population and a continent of vast resources. Our national interest demands that we give this rich and diverse continent a much higher priority.

The Democratic party condemns South Africa for unjustly holding political prisoners. Soviet harassment of the Sakharovs is identical to South African house arrests of African political opponents of the South African regime. Specifically, the detention of Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, and Winnie Mandela must be brought to the world's attention, and we demand their immediate release. In addition, we demand the immediate release of all other political prisoners in South Africa.



Cesar Chavez joined with other marchers from the United Farmworkers of America in the Labor March to urge support for a new boycott of non-union grapes.

(Photo: Richard Brown)



Marching in the Labor March Sunday, July 15, were supporters of a call to Boycott Campbell Soup Company products. Organizers say Campbell farmworkers in the Mid-West are being paid sub-minimum wages and are subject to unhealthy working conditions.

(Photo: Richard Brown)

Political spiritualism infused campaign

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—Throughout the campaign trail of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a political spiritualism was injected before every speech or rally in the form of a prayer or invocation.

Not only were the mode and manners of the Black church incorporated into his presidential campaign, but Black churches across the country laid out a welcome mat for him. Rev. Clay Evans, Jackson's pastor at Fellowship Baptist Church in Chicago, said, "Every city that Jesse went to there was a Black church with a congregation ready to be addressed. While other candidates had to find somewhere to speak, Jesse's launch pad was already established."

Jackson's campaign aides said the bulk of his support morally, spiritually and financially came from thousands of Black churches. The constitutional constraint providing for separation of church and state did not apply to Afro-Americans since the bulk of their organized forces started and stayed with the Black church.

"We believe in the holistic concerns of our constituency as they manifest itself politically, economically and socially," Evans said, dismissing the constitutional provision.

Father Ken Westly, a Roman Catholic priest from Oakland, California, said it was just commonplace for Jackson to come from the church. "Our leaders have always come from the church. I'm here supporting Jackson not so much because he is from the church but because he pulled our people together as a group to make the powers that be listen to our needs."

Jackson's political spiritualism reached its height during his address July 17 on the convention floor. "His speech had content as well as feeling. He has always taken the high road by saying if falsely accused, don't take vengeance on me. If I did something wrong, please forgive me. Now, that is a first in American politics. Because of Jackson, politics and the church has formed a permanent partnership. Things will never be the same," Evans concluded.