

Jackson campaign prepares for the Democratic Convention



UNITY PHOTO

Jackson with Navajos in New Mexico, May 1984.

Future of the Rainbow, the fight for fairness and equality in the Democratic Party, and main agenda items in post-primary period

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Editor

In the aftermath of the presidential primary season, Walter Mondale declared himself the Democratic nominee with the 1,967 votes necessary for nomination on the first ballot. Gary Hart addressed a cheering crowd of 4,000 in Denver as he reiterated his campaign themes against Mondale and pledged to continue on to San Francisco. Simultaneously, Hart met with congressional leaders of the Democratic Party and attempted to situate himself for maximum influence at the convention and for a possible second run for the nomination in 1988.

Fulfilling his pledge to promote peace in Central America, Jesse Jackson plans to visit Panama, Nicaragua and Cuba on June 23-28. The trip broadens further the Rainbow Coalition's links to Latinos, peace activists and students. On July 1, Jackson plans a mass demonstration at the U.S.-Mexico border to dramatize opposition to the Simpson-Mazzoli bill and to promote peace in Central America.

Jackson also carried out a round of meetings with congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. After meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus, at which unity was reached on the unfairness of the delegate selection rules, Jackson also met with the House Democratic Caucus and House Speaker Tip O'Neill. At these meetings, Jackson stressed the importance of the Democratic Party addressing the unfairness and lack of democracy in the rules for delegate selection and the existence of barriers to minority participation such as run-off primaries in some states.

In addition, it appears that Mondale and some of his supporters in the Democratic Party are trying to ap-

point a number of Black Mondale supporters to key committee and convention posts with the aim of diluting the unity of the Black voice at the convention. This is in total disregard for the near unanimity of Black voters behind the candidacy of Rev. Jackson.

This is an old tactic, and in an interview with *The New York Times*, Jackson appeared bitter at these attempts to disparage and undermine his achievements in the primary battles. Such tactics by Mondale and the Democratic Party leadership will undermine the ability of the Democrats to defeat Ronald Reagan in the fall by dampening the enthusiasm of the many new voters who have been enfranchised in the course of the Jackson campaign.

June 5 primaries

The June 5 primaries ended a long primary season for Rev. Jackson on a victorious note. Jackson won 21% of the vote in California, 24% in New Jersey, and 12% in New Mexico. In California, for the first time, white support for Jackson exceeded 10%, reaching 13%. Jackson's strong showing in these states, especially in California and New Mexico, where the Black population stands at 7% and 2% respectively, demonstrated the broadening of the Rainbow.

Jackson placed special emphasis on campaigning among Asians, Latinos and Native Americans. In large part, his strong showing in New Mexico reflected the support he received from Native Americans, who constitute 7% of the electorate in that state. In California, Jackson received over 20% of the Asian American vote statewide, going close to 30% among Chinese voters in San Francisco. This strong showing was phenomenal, making Asian Americans Rev. Jackson's strongest supporters outside of Afro-Americans.

Jackson received 17% of the Latino vote statewide in California, but reached as high as 25% in the San Francisco Bay Area. This reflected in large part the

relatively stronger Get Out the Vote effort in the San Francisco Bay Area. California also saw the appearance of strong committees of Jews and of Arab Americans for Jackson.

Many close observers of the Jackson campaign remarked that the Rainbow had developed considerably from the time Jackson first announced his candidacy. In large part this is due to the fact that Jackson has deepened and expanded his positions on more issues which speak directly to workers and oppressed nationalities. Jackson's program has become considerably more developed as his campaign progressed.

For example, on the issue of imports, Jackson's position developed from a vague one of a fair trade policy to one of clarity and precision. At a rally in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, Jackson said, "Unemployed autoworkers have been told over and over again to blame the Japanese for their loss of jobs while Lee Iacocca used a billion dollars in taxpayers' money and a billion dollars in concessions from the workers to 'streamline' his company — to close down nine plants and lay off one-third of his work force." Jackson also said in that same speech, "When industry asks for protection, they must prove that they are involving their entire work force in meeting the needs of American consumers, not in raising the salaries of their executives." This development of Jackson's views is reflected on numerous other issues.

Chicago Rainbow Workshop

After winning nearly 400 delegates and a mandate from the Afro-American masses, who supported him by a ratio of four-to-one over Mondale, the Jackson campaign is now turning its attention to preparation for the San Francisco convention and the future of the Rainbow. A Rainbow Workshop has been called for Chicago on June 29, 30 and July 1. State chairpersons

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The Rainbow expanded because Jackson deepened his positions on issues which speak directly to workers and oppressed nationalities



(Above) Jackson in San Francisco's Latino community on May 29, 1984.
(Right) A program in Atlanta, GA, February 26, 1984.



Support rally at East Los Angeles Community College Conference, May 4.

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and campaign coordinators, delegates and representatives from national constituency groups have been invited and are expected to attend.

While the agenda has not been finalized at the time *UNITY* goes to press, participants expect to discuss which demands and issues will be raised at the Democratic Convention, how they will be raised, and which ones are non-negotiable. Central to all the issues will be a demand for changes in the delegate selection process. Jackson won 22% of the popular vote (over three and one-quarter million votes), but he was allotted only 7% of the delegates.

At the Democratic Platform Committee hearings in Washington, D.C., Jackson stated, "The Democratic Party must establish a standard of one man, one vote in its delegate selection procedures and eliminate the threshold requirement." The threshold requirement set by the Democratic Party varies from state to state. It generally requires a candidate to achieve 20%, even 30% of the vote to qualify for delegates in a legislative district.

In addition, current rules which are based on congressional districts also discriminate against minorities, who have already suffered due to gerrymandering. The boundaries for many congressional districts in the U.S., especially in areas of minority concentration, are drawn in such a way as to prevent a Black or Third World majority, thus decreasing the chances for a Black or minority candidate to win election.

All these various stacked rules are patently anti-democratic and have their roots in the betrayal of the Reconstruction. Following the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1876-1877, the Northern capitalists pulled the federal troops out of the South, let loose the Ku Klux Klan and drove Black people out of the Southern state legislatures through the enactment and enforcement of Jim Crow laws to deny the extension of democracy to Afro-Americans. Dual registration, at-large elections, second primaries, gerrymandering and other rules and regulations were set up for the express purpose of denying democracy to Black people and to suppress Black political power.

Despite hypocritical laments to the contrary, the Democratic Party leadership along with the rest of the U.S. political ruling circles has historically attempted to limit and restrict Black empowerment. After the

Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965 following decades of struggle and the murder of hundreds of Black and other civil rights activists, the battle moved on against attempts to ignore and go around the Act. One of Jackson's demands is full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

These questions go to the heart of the lack of democracy in the U.S. today and are central to the Jackson campaign. Jackson, in his campaign, has linked the denial of democratic rights of Black people to the denial of democracy for everyone in the U.S. This struggle for equality and power in the Democratic Party and in U.S. politics will be central to any successful Jackson strategy at the convention.

The Democratic Party cannot hope to win in November against Reagan without the wholehearted

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support of all the elements of Jackson's rainbow, especially the Afro-American masses.

Future of the rainbow

The Rainbow Workshop in Chicago is also expected to discuss the future of the Rainbow Coalition. In just over seven months, new multinational progressive coalitions have sprung up all over the country to support the Jackson candidacy. Spurred on by the message of empowerment, peace, justice and equality, thousands of new activists have entered the progressive movement. There is a strong sentiment to continue the Rainbow Coalition and elect progressive candidates to office, advocate progressive legislation, and conduct ongoing voter education projects.

In a press conference held June 6 in Los Angeles, Jackson spoke of the need to "institutionalize" the Rainbow with a formal national and state structure.

As a nationwide organization, the Rainbow Coalition could channel support to key congressional and state races in the South to enable empowerment of the Black majority. One key race will be in Mississippi's Second Congressional District, where Black state representative Robert Clark faces white Republican Webb Franklin. Franklin beat Clark two years ago by campaigning with the slogan, "Vote for Webb Franklin, He's One of Us." If Clark is victorious, he will be the first Black congressman elected from the Deep South since the 1880's.

In New York City, Jackson supporters are giving a big push to the movement to oust racist, reactionary Ed Koch from the mayor's office in November 1985.

Whether the Rainbow can be institutionalized at this time is not clear. While the hope and determination are there, actual success will depend on the ability of local forces to forge practical unity around issues and priorities, both among different activist leaders and among the masses of different nationalities. This is not an easy process as the primary races show. There was unity around Reverend Jackson as a candidate. But whether or not this unity can be sustained in the absence of a unifying campaign is still to be seen.

But there is great hope that a workable program will come out of the Rainbow Workshop which can continue and strengthen the Rainbow through the convention, the fall elections and beyond.

The accomplishments of the Jackson campaign

Jackson's campaign inspired hope among the poor, minorities, workers, youth and others by articulating their needs, aspirations and dignity with passion and precision. Black people by the millions rallied to the Jackson candidacy, which embodied their desire for democracy, justice and equality. He ignited a renewed sense of pride, purpose and national consciousness among Afro-Americans and all the poor, locked-out and disenfranchised.

Jackson won in 30 congressional districts across the South, coming in first in the popular vote in Louisiana, Virginia, South Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Mississippi, and placing a strong second or third in many other states. His vote in many primaries exceeded Reagan's margin of victory over Carter in 1980.

Most of these victories were won despite the opposition of establishment Black leaders, demonstrating the



May 15, 1984: Jesse Jackson speaks at Oakland Convention Center. UNITY PHOTO: DEBORAH LOWE (Inset) Jackson rally in New York, March 31. UNITY PHOTO

daring, courage and vision of Jesse Jackson.

Single-handedly, Jackson forced the Democratic presidential race to address the issues of racism, foreign intervention, peace abroad and justice at home. The Jackson campaign activated broad numbers of new voters and activists, laying the groundwork for moving the electorate as a whole more to the left and for forcing change in the Democratic Party.

Long-term impact of the Jackson campaign

Jackson's campaign enfranchised nearly one million new voters, most of them Black, and brought them into the political process. Jackson's message stirred anew the desire of Black people for political power, for self-determination and self-respect. This is a powerful political force, not just for the struggle and demands of Afro-Americans, but of all the poor, other Third World people, workers, women and the elderly. This new force has the potential of changing the political complexion of this country.

Immediately the question arises of the future of the Democratic Party. Since 1980, the Democratic Party has moved solidly towards the right and center. The so-called "Southern strategy" best articulated by Carter in 1976 calls for the Democrats to seek to win and hold the South, accommodating the most reactionary and backward sectors of the party leadership — the Southern "bollweevils." In the past four years, progressive legislation, such as the ERA and the nuclear freeze, put forth by liberal and moderate Democratic congressmen, was sabotaged by the votes of these Southern bollweevils. Conversely, Reagan's cuts in social programs and military budget increases were passed because of the support of these Southern

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Democrats.

It is also these reactionary and backward forces who most strongly oppose any concession to Jackson's call for more democracy and reform in the Democratic Party, especially in matters relating to the South and Black empowerment. Some party observers express the fear that any concessions to Jackson may drive the bollweevils out of the Democratic Party and towards the Republicans. Already, according to these same observers, the Democratic Party has been steadily losing ground to the Republicans in the South.

The question of how best to defeat Reagan and to turn this country around from the right-wing dead end Reagan has planned for it has been answered in the Democratic Party by a wish to duplicate Reagan's move to the right. This is also a dead-end strategy. Instead, the Jackson campaign has raised the possibility of rebuilding of the Democratic Party to more genuinely express the sentiments of the "New Majority" — Afro-Americans, Latinos, other Third World people, women, youth, the poor, the elderly, the peace movement and all other progressive sectors. This kind of strategy is more likely to stop Reagan and the right.

This idea is hardly new. Although aided considerably by the developing demographics which show that Afro-Americans, Latinos, Asians and other Third World people will be over 35% of the U.S. population by 2020, this same basic idea was first stated during the 1944 presidential campaign by Franklin D. Roosevelt. He said, "I think the time has come for the Democratic Party to get rid of its reactionary elements in the South, and to attract to it the liberals in the Republican Party. . . . We ought to have two real parties — one liberal and the other conservative. As it is now, each party is split by dissenters. . . . Of course, I'm talking about long-range politics — something that we can't accomplish this year. But we can do it in 1948, and we can start building it up right after the election this fall. From the liberals of both parties, Wilkie and I together can form a new, really liberal party in America."

This direction may become increasingly possible as the forces activated by the Jackson campaign continue to develop and grow.

The relationship of the Jackson campaign and the struggle for socialism

Clearly the establishment or transformation of the

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Democratic and Republican Parties into a liberal and a conservative party would not solve in one sweep the necessity to move the political system in a more progressive direction. But we must end the current situation where two parties represent basically the same interests. This will allow a freer political atmosphere which would aid the development of real alternatives to the present system and would set the basis for the development of new, more progressive political parties.

Jesse Jackson is a progressive Democrat. He is putting forward a program which seeks to reform the worst aspects of American capitalism — national oppression, military intervention in the third world, poverty, inequality of women, unfair taxation, and neglect of our youth and elderly. He is by no stretch of the imagination a socialist or even anti-imperialist. But he has a democratic vision, one which is in the objective interests of the people of this country and the world. Because socialists are committed to full democracy, they should support him wholeheartedly.

The struggle for democracy is not a side struggle to the struggle for socialism. To speed the coming socialist revolution, we must constantly demand higher and higher levels of democracy. It is democracy that threatens capitalism most directly today. It is socialists who are and should be the staunchest fighters for democracy.

The Jackson campaign has mobilized, activated and inspired countless millions to stand up and to demand the right to make the fundamental decisions which determine their lives. This movement challenges capitalism to its core, and it is the duty of all who believe in progress to support, participate in and contribute to this movement.