

IN THE NATION



By Larry Remer

SAN DIEGO

THERE'S ONE STOP THAT JERRY Brown has to make on his way to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. In two weeks he must get himself re-elected governor of California. For a supposedly liberal Democrat these days, that would seem a difficult undertaking. The aftershocks of this spring's tax revolt are still reverberating across the country. In Massachusetts, Gov. Michael Dukakis—who'd been said to possess more than a passing likeness to Brown—fell victim to a primary opponent who waged a campaign promising tax relief modeled after Prop. 13. A similar fate also befell Minnesota Congressman Donald Fraser—once a stalwart of anti-war efforts to block Vietnam appropriations—who tried to move up to Hubert Humphrey's old Senate seat.

But Jerry Brown, the political Zenmaster, has stood at the epicenter of the tax-quake and survived.

Six months ago Brown was barely an even-money bet to win re-election. A sense of ennui appeared to grip both the Brown administration and the public's perception of him. As Brown's fabled public approval rating dipped below 50 percent for the first time, Howard Jarvis' drive to pass Prop. 13 was moving into high gear.

Though Brown opposed 13 when it was on the ballot, he quickly moved after its two-to-one victory to become identified with its implementation. A "born again" tax rebel, he took the lead in slashing government spending and in cancelling scheduled raises for public employees. The suddenness and completeness of his flip-flop on 13 so confused the electorate that polls taken in September showed a majority of voters thinking Brown had supported Prop. 13 all along.

As the California gubernatorial campaign enters its final weeks, Jerry Brown appears to have put it all together. Jetting around the state to bask in the glow of large, friendly crowds along the campaign trail, he exudes confidence and inner peace—born not from chanting a mantra but from the latest polls, which give him a commanding 20-point lead over his Republican rival, Evelle Younger.

Subliminal messages.

In Jerry Brown, Carter's pollster Pat Cadell saw the most powerful political media superstar in the country, capable of rallying the grass roots and waging a strong campaign against Carter in 1980.

Jerry Brown's media mystique is his most valuable weapon—and he guards it closely. On television, he takes pains to be "cool" and pays assiduous attention to the actual and subliminal messages he gives out.

Former intimate Jim Lorenz recalls watching campaign commercials during the '74 election with Brown noting that "I sound tough and I haven't proposed

ZEN POLITICS

Jerry Brown appeases the voters with shell game

Brown's ability to "go both right and left at the same time" is unnerving for his labor backers.

anything the liberals can criticize me for. In fact," he crowed, "I haven't committed myself to do anything at all."

After he took office, his popularity soared when he turned in his chauffeur-driven Cadillac for a more modest Plymouth. It climbed still higher after he refused to move into the \$1.3 million governor's mansion built by his predecessor, Ronald Reagan. Jerry preferred a mattress on the floor of a two-bedroom apartment a short walk from his office.

Out of such stuff as Brown's quips about Starship Earth came a presidential campaign that beat Jimmy Carter in three out of four primaries. Pressed at the time for more detailed descriptions of his program and plans, Brown replied with a smile, "It will emerge."

But Brown has touched the segment of the population that is just coming of age—the post World War II generation. They identify with his iconoclastic nature and his eclectic approach to life. Toughened by the '60s, Brown was peripherally involved with the civil rights, anti-war and farmworker movements. The decade left him with a healthy degree of skepticism and a willingness to challenge conventional notions.

Opposes nuclear power.

The real question is, what has Brown done in his four years in office?

Brown's tenure in office can be divided roughly into two segments. The early Jerry Brown has a decidedly more leftward tilt than the present incarnation. On gut issues, Brown has always stood by the liberal and activist elements in the Democratic Party. He has:

- Stood firmly against the death penalty, vetoing its re-instatement by the legislature only to have that action overridden by a two-thirds vote.

- Supported the United Farm Workers by steering through a bill creating an Agricultural Labor Relations Board and giving farmworkers in California the right to

organize a union in the fields.

- Opposed nuclear power. Brown's opposition last year to construction of the SJundesert nuclear plan near Blythe was the key element in killing the project.

- Appointed dozens of qualified women and minorities to judgeships and other state posts. Considered the most significant long-term effect of his administration, Brown opened up state boards and agencies to consumer and public representatives, put blacks and Chicanos into judicial posts in unprecedented numbers (capped by his appointment of Rose Bird as Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court), and generally gave access to power institutions to segments of the population that had no access under Reagan.

For those reasons, the bulk of activist forces in California support Brown's bid for re-election. Chief among these is the Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED), whose chair, Tom Hayden, ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate in the Democratic primary in 1976.

Left support.

In an interview with *IN THESE TIMES*, Hayden reiterated that support. "It's a question of whether or not one sees any value in who is holding executive offices like president and governor," Hayden said. "I would prefer for us to deal with Jerry Brown, who represents an alternative energy path and entry into political power for groups like CED and the UFW, than with Younger, who would exclude us and probably try to repress us."

"There's just too much fascination with Brown. I think his personality is simple and his outlook is simple: To get him to react you have to create a constituency. For example, he might say to himself that he thinks the farmworkers are right. But if there aren't any farmworkers out there demanding that he do what he knows he ought to do then he won't do it."

In addition to CED, Brown has the solid backing of the black community, the

Chicano community, nearly all of organized labor, and nearly every activist group in the state. The left in California was as deeply shaken by Prop. 13 as was Brown, and the appearance of his vulnerability has forced progressives, liberals, and grass-roots forces to close ranks behind him.

Unnerving ally.

With a governor who supports farmworkers, environmentalists, and access to the system for women and minorities, one would think that California's progressive forces would have cause to be ecstatic that he appears to be on the verge of winning re-election.

Not so. His veto of the death penalty is perhaps his best known "act of conscience." Thus, he can afford to support increased prison construction, longer terms for so-called "career criminals," and improvements in police technology, thereby winning the endorsement of several police groups including PORAC—the statewide Police Officers Research and Action Council—and the influential Los Angeles Police League.

"The ACLU says I have the same position on crime as Reagan did," he quipped recently.

This ability, in Brown's own words, to "go both right and left at the same time" is downright unnerving for Brown backers, especially labor.

Shortly after he was elected, Brown almost single-handedly enacted the farm labor law. He always backed collective bargaining for public employees, raises in unemployment benefits, and extension of workers' compensation benefits to domestic help.

But Brown wrangled repeatedly during his term, with John Henning, the statewide AFL-CIO head. Only after Brown appointed Henning to the prestigious Regents of the University of California did the acrimony subside. More important, Brown's relationships with local labor leaders and the rank and file have gone from poor to worse.

In the aftermath of Prop. 13, Brown made a pay freeze for public employees the cornerstone of his "born again" tax cutter image. After he announced his plan, thousands of workers gathered on the Capitol Mall to protest. Brown was booed off the stage when he showed up to explain his position. And recently, the feisty California State Employees Association—which had contributed \$15,000 to his '74 campaign—voted to "publicly oppose" him.

Nixon-like opponent.

Brown's strongest asset in his current race may well be his Republican opponent, Attorney General Evelle Younger, who cut his political teeth in the Nixon/Reagan heyday of the California GOP.

Younger calls for 50 nuclear plants in California by the year 2000, a dismantling of the farm labor legislation, and a 6.

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NUCLEAR

Protest salty solution for nuclear waste

By Dede Feldman

CARLSBAD, N.M.

MORE THAN 200 PEOPLE gathered in a sunny park on the outskirts of Carlsbad, N.M., Oct. 7, to protest the Department of Energy's plans to store radioactive waste in salt formations 27 miles to the southwest. The project, known as the Waste Isolation Pilot Program (WIPP), is the only "feasible site" being studied by the DOE for permanent storage of nuclear waste. If approved, it would house transuranic and high level wastes from the government's weapons program, as well as 1,000 spent fuel assemblies from commercial reactors around the country.

The crowd cheered speakers and a *tatro troupe* composed mainly of young Chicanos from southern New Mexico.

"Let's locate it in New Mexico," the mock DOE representative shouts in a short play about the federal government's nationwide search for a storage facility for nuclear waste. "All they have there is Chicanos, Native Americans and dumb cowboys—they'll never get together."

"What's the matter?" a mock government official and military man shouts when they hesitate to take the radioactive waste. "Don't you like the government?"

"We are the government," the chorus roars back.

Teatro is a Chicano-style street theater that grew out of the New Mexico land grant movement and the United Farmworkers struggle in the 1960s. This is the first time it has been used to dramatize a nuclear issue.

One speaker, Carroll Wilson, who described himself as a Presbyterian and a businessman, said that many residents of Southeastern New Mexico had moved there to retire.

"Who in his right mind would want to leave one hellhole and come to one that will make hell look good? What businessman would want to locate his business here?" Wilson asked.

Wilson, from Canyon, Texas, said many Texans opposed the WIPP project because radioactive materials would be transported through Texas to the New Mexico site. Wilson said that in his area the Chamber of Commerce, the County Commission and the Court Judges and Commissioners Association oppose the disposal of nuclear waste in their county.

In Carlsbad, members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor and other city officials support the WIPP site because they feel it will create jobs and bolster the national push toward nuclear energy. No city, county, state or labor officials spoke or attended the Carlsbad rally.

Criticisms leveled by speakers at Sunday's rally centered around the government's willingness to go ahead with the WIPP project before safety studies are completed.

"They must think I'm a mushroom, they keep me in the dark and feed me nothing but horse manure," Rick Wilcox, another Texan, told the crowd.

DOE chose the salt formations at Carlsbad because salt seemed to be the only formation stable enough to remain unchanged for the hundreds of thousands of years that the wastes will remain radioactive. Yet salt is a highly soluble medium and many scientists, both within and outside of the DOE, have said that water could dissolve some of the salt, opening a path for possible leakage, cause col-

lapse holes or erosion of the salt formation.

"Geologically speaking," the WIPP site is not worth a darn," says Roxanne Kartchner, chairwoman of the Carlsbad Nuclear Waste Forum, and a principal organizer of the rally.

Kartchner is careful to separate the rally's opposition to the WIPP site from opposition to the entire nuclear question.

"We're talking about our town and our countryside, we're not anti-nuclear, we're anti-WIPP," the young housewife said.

"We're not the radicals," she added. "The opposition's the radicals."

In an interview, Kartchner said that one of the most disturbing things about WIPP was the government's "lies and deviations" about what is being stored in the repository, and whether the waste will be retrievable.

As originally conceived by AEC, the Carlsbad site was to handle low and intermediate levels of radioactive waste. There was also to be some experimental

tion on a retrievable basis with higher level waste. But in October of 1977 New Mexicans were told the facility was primarily for high level defense wastes.

This spring at hearings held in Carlsbad, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and in Texas, DOE officials said that commercial wastes—including spent fuel rods—would also be located at WIPP on an experimental basis. At the hearings, DOE officials admitted that wastes were retrievable only within the first 20 years of storage.

Faced with an outraged New Mexico public, DOE officials, who even conservative New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici called "less than candid," promised that New Mexico would have the "veto" over any waste repository.

Just how that veto was to be exercised was left open.

"There are lots of unanswered questions," Kartchner said. "If only I could feel that they were telling the truth about WIPP being the best solution, not just the *only* solution."

LABOR

Slow progress on safety and health

By Dan Marshall

SINCE 1970, WHEN CONGRESS passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the labor movement has turned its attention steadily toward health and safety in the workplace. Progress has been slow—only ten full-time industrial hygienists are employed by unions—and carried forward mainly by individual unions like the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), the Clothing and Textile Workers, the Mine Workers, and the United Auto Workers. Now the AFL-CIO, reacting to pressure from its constituent unions and from rank-and-file demands, is placing a higher priority on health and safety procedures.

In early September, the AFL-CIO held a conference on health and safety convened by its new Department of Occupational Safety and Health. The department, which is directed by George H.R. Taylor, will have three full-time staff members and an annual budget of \$100,000. While its creation is only a

small step toward protecting the health and safety of 20 million unionized workers, its existence is a sign of the federation's growing concern. (Taylor predicts that in five years unions will employ 25 to 30 health technicians.)

"This first AFL-CIO conference was an impressive performance," writes veteran labor reporter John Herling. "The three-day session brought together as large a representative delegation as a constitutional convention." In his opening speech, AFL-CIO president George Meany focused on the importance of beating back right-wing attempts to "reform" the Occupational Safety and Health Act by exempting small businesses.

"Everybody's being forced into looking at this question," Anthony Mazzochi of the OCAW recently told *Business Week*. "If you critically examine what each union does, you see that people are at different places. But they're in motion, whether it's a hard run or a walk."

Some unions consider health and safety issues top bargaining demands. In 1976, the United Rubber Workers won access

to lists of chemicals used by Uniroyal, Inc. Since 1972, rubber companies have been required to set aside one cent for each hour worked for research into possible health hazards in the industry.

The United Steel Workers, with an "international health staff" of ten and 800 local health and safety representatives, won a "rate retention" provision in last year's negotiations with steel and aluminum companies. The provision requires workers transferred from a higher to a lower paying job because of exposure to toxic substances to be paid at the higher rate.

Barriers imposed by industry and by the union's own priorities stall action on health and safety issues. Companies often balk at releasing information about potentially hazardous chemicals used in their production processes. The few health and safety experts employed by unions are compelled to divide their time fighting to retain the 1970 Safety and Health legislation, testifying at standard-setting hearings, and formulating collective bargaining demands.