

By Dave Lindorff

NEW YORK

JESSE JACKSON LOST THE NEW YORK STATE primary, and with it, the tenuous mantle of front-runner in the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. But the good news is that in narrowly winning the vote in the five boroughs of New York City, despite the most vicious race-baiting in recent memory by Mayor Ed Koch, Jackson has resurrected politics in that metropolis from the cesspool of corruption and apathy into which it had sunk over the course of three Koch terms.

Jackson came into New York looking like a possible winner. The polls showed him not only close to Michael Dukakis, but closing. On the Sunday before the April 19 primary, the *Daily News* bannered with the headline: "Too Close to Call."

But Jackson wound up not running against Dukakis at all. Dukakis barely mentioned him. Rather, Jackson was forced to run against the mayor, and his "sidekick" Albert Gore. Gore, desperate for help in his dying campaign, sought and accepted an endorsement from Koch, who had already told New Yorkers that Jews would "have to be crazy" to vote for Jackson. After signing on with Gore, Koch began trotting out references to Jackson's "Hymietown" remark in 1984, his "embrace" of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat and the never proven charge that Jackson had falsely claimed to have been holding Martin Luther King Jr. when he died.

An embarrassed Gore, after pandering to conservative Jewish voters and getting Koch, found himself being dragged around the Big Apple on the mayor's arm while Koch race-baited Jackson.

This situation proved uncomfortable for the Gore campaign staff, and if the expression on Gore's face in TV news coverage of the duo on the stump can be believed, for Gore himself. As a top member of the Gore team commented the day after the New York primary, "Look, when Koch came to us on Friday morning (four days before the primary vote) and said he wanted to endorse



Jackson in New York: despite the loss, his campaign revitalized politics in the Big Apple.

The primary irony: Jesse's New York loss was also a win of sorts

Gore, we were glad. We knew Koch had high negatives in New York, but we were low on money, and going nowhere and we needed something to jump-start the campaign. But I think we underestimated the way the Koch story would supercede the Gore story. It really became a Koch story. And we didn't realize what Koch would be saying about Jesse."

One result of Koch's campaign of hate was a surge in death threats against Jackson, which led to doubled Secret Service protection, and less crowd contact than might have been the case. The other was that Jackson had to spend his time with reporters denying he was anti-Semitic instead of talking about his programs and policies.

Even with this not entirely unexpected wrench thrown into his campaign, Jackson did surprisingly well—perhaps not in terms of what might have been, but compared to 1984, or by any historical standard.

Surprising gains: Despite Koch's and Gore's frantic appeal to the Jewish community, Jackson netted 15 percent of the city's Jewish vote, double his showing in 1984. Perhaps more important, 75 percent of the Jewish vote went to Dukakis, with exit polls showing that many voted for him instead of Gore because they didn't like Koch's divisive campaign. As one 38-year-old Jewish Brooklynite who said he was voting for Dukakis told Jackson during one of the latter's campaign swings through the borough, "I apologize for our mayor."

Upstate, too, Jackson did surprisingly well. In rural Tioga County, for instance, a region of mostly farmers and conservative Republican workers (and with almost no black population), Jackson took 26 percent of the vote. His overall upstate total was 22 percent. Moreover, local Jackson activists upstate say their candidate was proving popular among farmers of both parties, but since most upstate voters are registered Republican, they couldn't vote in the primary under New York rules.

Whatever the outcome of the national primary campaign, it is clear that the Jackson effort in New York—particularly his good showing upstate and his victory over the Koch/Gore team in the city—will reverberate in this state for some time to come. As Jackson himself said on the day of the primary, as it was becoming clear that he would not pull an upset against Dukakis, "In many ways we've already won. We've laid a precedent for change in New York that will be with us for a long time to come."

Upstate, the Rainbow Coalition has become a permanent political fixture. In the 29th Congressional District along the shores of Lake Erie, currently represented by Republican Rep. Frank Horton, a Rainbow chap-

ter has been formed that intends to run local candidates as early as next year. Further south in Tomkins County, Jackson campaign leader Michael Cohen says the Jackson campaign produced so many volunteers—350 to 400—that "at times I didn't have something for everyone to do!"

What all those people—and others like them across the state—will do in November is anybody's guess. But it's not just a matter of how the party treats Jackson, says Cohen. "That's just a symbol of how they're dealing with the issues," he explains. "There are a lot of people in the Jackson campaign who are very unhappy with the way the [Democratic primary] campaign is developing. We know there are a lot of Democratic leaders who are breathing a sigh of relief after New York. It's a bit premature to talk about Dukakis being the nominee, but assuming he was, he'd have to show us that he's worth supporting. This is not just another election. We're putting back a coalition that has been the base of the Democratic Party, but that has been forgotten in recent years."

Meanwhile, in New York, the Jackson plurality—created by the votes of blacks, Hispanics and liberal and left white voters, including Jews, with the strong support of many of the city's large unions—has demonstrated that Koch and what journalists Paul DuBrul and Jack Newfield have termed the "permanent government" of real estate and other business interests can be beaten.

A lesson learned: That lesson has not been lost on those who have been battling the mayor. Says Ruth Messinger, a New York City councilwoman who has already said she is contemplating a run for one of the three city-wide offices (mayor, controller or city council president), "I thought the mayor's behavior in the primary was an embarrassment and source of shame for all New Yorkers, regardless of who they did or didn't endorse. I'm quite clear that he did as much as he could to poison the atmosphere, but whether it was so intended or not, it constituted a fueling of the forces of racial division and tension, and it is of extraordinary importance that the voters of the city not only did not rise to the bait, but by vote and by comment rejected it out of hand. There was a broad coalition that worked quietly and effectively for Jackson. But there was an infinitely broader coalition that was upset and ashamed at how the mayor was trying to set people against each other."

Adds Messinger, "It is becoming clearer and clearer to the people of this city that we are ill served by a chief executive who is so anxious to be center stage that he'll say anything to get there. If the mayor does in fact run for re-election in 1989, it will be up to all those New Yorkers ready for bread rather than circuses to unite to defeat him."

As a shell-shocked member of the Gore campaign in Washington said after the primary, "We went in to New York planning to do politics as usual. But in New York you get caught up in small local and historical battles."

Indeed, by drawing Mayor Koch out on Jackson, Gore stumbled into a historical battle he never expected. But in doing so he inadvertently may have opened the door to the first progressive mayor in New York in decades, and perhaps to the city's first minority mayor.

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Jackson may be down, but is he out?

The relief among party leaders and even TV commentators was almost palpable after the votes came in from the New York primary. "Dukakis," the headlines screamed, "Now the Front-runner!"

But not so fast. True, he left New York with just over half the 2,081 delegates he needs to cinch the nomination. But there are other primaries to go, including California and New Jersey, which even in a two-man race could be wild cards.

And what about Al Gore's delegates? Gore suspended his election bid last week, but campaign insiders say he may yet withdraw from the race.

As a weary Gore staffer observed, if Gore withdraws, many of his at-large delegates from Super Tuesday would go to Jackson. "We're getting a lot of pressure (from Southern white Democratic leaders) not to withdraw," the staffer says.

But everyone in the Gore campaign is aware that if handled right, Gore has a bright political future in national Democratic politics. The problem right now: he has so alienated blacks, an essential con-

stituency in Democratic politics, that he could be ruined unless he can rebuild some bridges. One way, a staffer suggests, would be to directly, or indirectly through a withdrawal, toss his delegates to Jackson.

Another imponderable is what might happen on the convention floor. If Dukakis does not have enough delegates to lock in the nomination going into Atlanta, many of the more liberal delegates from the Simon, Gephardt and Gore camps might jump to Jackson.

Meanwhile, Republican front-runner George Bush seems to be stumbling a bit himself on the way to the prize. Though essentially unopposed in the New York Republican primary last Tuesday—all his opponents save Pat Robertson have withdrawn (and most never made it onto the New York ballot in any event), and Robertson didn't campaign here—he got only 95 percent of the vote state-wide. In some places, like Tompkins County, he fared even worse. There he drew only 75 percent of the vote.

—D.L.

By Joel Bleifuss

The middle of the pumpkin

The National Park Service has nominated Whittaker Chambers' Maryland farm for the National Register of Historic Places. Chambers, a former Communist Party member turned *Time* magazine editor, made news on Dec. 2, 1948, when he dramatically led House Un-American Activities Committee investigators out to his garden and over to a pumpkin. The pumpkin, which he had hollowed out that morning, contained microfilmed copies of State Department documents. Chambers claimed Alger Hiss asked him to pass the documents on to a Soviet agent in 1938. On Jan. 20, 1950, Hiss was convicted of perjury and sentenced to five years in prison for denying under oath that he had given Chambers copies of those State Department documents. While Hiss sat in prison, Chambers went on to write his autobiography, *Witness*. According to the Park Service nomination form, *Witness* "portrays in stark terms the contemporary struggle between Communism and freedom.... Among those moved by *Witness* was a recent convert to conservatism, Ronald Reagan, who as president would posthumously honor Chambers with a Medal of Freedom." The Park Service explains that it wants to put the Chambers farm on the Historic Register because "the [Hiss] case heightened public awareness of Communist penetration in the federal government, hardened Cold-War attitudes, and buttressed American conservatism after its long eclipse under the New Deal."

Call it terrorism

On January 27 "In Short" published a list of 12 ways Israel was like South Africa. That list was in response to the Israeli government's press release, "Ten ways Israel is not like South Africa." Although Israel's public-relations gambit has since been scuttled, our list goes on:

13. South Africa and Israel both use political assassination as a method of conflict-resolution. On March 29 in Paris South African agents murdered Dulcie September, an African National Congress diplomat. On April 16 in Tunis Israeli commandos murdered Khalil Wazir, the No. 2 man in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Later that day, residents of the Occupied Territories took to the streets, leaving Israeli troops no choice but to kill 14 of them.

Serfs for a season

Next year U.S. fruit and vegetable growers are planning to import hundreds of thousands of Third-World people to bring in their crops. These indentured peasants, known as "guest workers," will be kept in special camps until the harvest is over and then shipped home. According to Paul Shukovsky of the *Tampa Tribune*, U.S. growers and ranchers already import 23,000 Caribbean and Mexican men each year. These numbers are expected to skyrocket as growers take advantage of a little-used section of immigration law called H2A. H2A allows the agricultural industry to import foreign labor when the government certifies that there are not enough domestic workers available. Industry and government officials maintain that such a labor shortage will soon exist. They argue that many of the 340,000 migrant farmworkers who have applied for citizenship under the amnesty provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 will leave the fields in search of better work.

A surplus of workers with rights

The United Farm Workers (UFW) maintains that there is no shortage of farm labor in the U.S. and that growers like to import H2A laborers in order to avoid the problems that come from domestic workers who have legal rights. H2A workers who attempt to organize can be immediately deported. "There is no shortage of workers," says Vice President Dolores Huerta. "The unemployment statistics for farm workers in the U.S. are double that of industrial workers." She says that in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 50 percent of all farm workers are unemployed or underemployed. "The employers want to keep this huge surplus of labor so that they can replace any farm worker who tries to improve his conditions," she says. The H2A program requires that before importing foreign labor, the growers must first attempt to recruit domestic workers. The U.S. Department of Labor has ignored that aspect of the law, says Huerta. "[Department officials] have been going around Florida holding meetings in fancy hotels to tell growers how to get H2A workers. The department is doing nothing about getting local farm workers employed."



Hispanic FBI agents take on the 'Mormon Mafia'

LOS ANGELES—The FBI is facing a challenge from within. A top Latino FBI official has gone to court with a class action suit that charges the bureau with racial discrimination. The suit, filed in 1987 by agent Bernardo Perez, has been joined by 250 of the 400 Hispanic agents who work for the FBI.

"There are administrators at the top levels of the FBI, at headquarters in Washington and in the field, and they are bigots," said Perez at a \$500-a-plate fund-raiser earlier this month in Los Angeles. Hosted by Hispanics for the FBI, a group of Los Angeles Latino leaders who support the suit, the dinner raised \$43,000.

For Perez, the formation of the group ends years of isolation. Perez feud, along with his charges of discrimination and religious favoritism within the agency's Los Angeles office, surfaced during the 1985 trial of Richard Miller. Miller, an FBI agent, was convicted of passing classified documents to the Soviet Union. During the trial, Perez testified that his

attempts to fire Miller for incompetence were blocked by the FBI's Los Angeles bureau chief, Richard Bretzing. Both Bretzing and Miller are Mormons.

Perez charged that Bretzing then transferred Miller to a counterintelligence unit headed by Bryce Christensen, another Mormon. This led to allegations of a so-called "Mormon Mafia" within the nation's second-largest FBI office. In the Los Angeles bureau about 50 of the 450 agents belong to the Mormon Church. During Miller's espionage trial, Bretzing testified that he had evoked the Mormon principles of redemption in hopes of getting Miller to confess his crime.

Last month Bretzing announced that he was leaving the FBI's L.A. bureau, which he has headed for the last six years, and going to Salt Lake City to become a security chief for the Mormon Church.

While the Miller case was still in federal court, Perez went to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and charged that Bretzing was anti-Hispanic and anti-Catholic. Perez was then transferred to El Paso, Texas.

Since Perez filed his suit, other

Hispanic agents have come forward to support his charges. Many of them now complain of repercussions. Agent Paul Megallanes says he has been unfairly disciplined for supporting Perez. He says he was stripped of his gun and his car and transferred from the Ventura, Calif., office to Los Angeles.

According to agent Rudolph Valadez, "It was a long time coming for us to admit we were discriminated against, because we did not want to face the fact that we could not rise to the top. We don't have any shortcomings. We are up against institutional bigotry."

One of the organizers of the Los Angeles fund-raiser, businessman Joe Sanchez, says that giving support to the class-action suit was "one of the most difficult decisions I have made in my life." He originally feared the FBI would retaliate against suit supporters via the Internal Revenue Service or Immigration Service. But now, because of the widespread support from Hispanic agents, business leaders and politicians, he thinks that is unlikely. "We're going to win," he says.

The suit goes to trial in El Paso, Texas, in June. —Timothy Stirtion

Sandinistas and contras talk but reach no conclusion

MANAGUA—"Llegaron de azul y blanco" (They arrived in blue and white), proclaimed the headline in the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. Clothed in the national colors, four of the contras' top political leaders and 45 lesser-known rebels set foot in Managua on April 15, Nicaraguan flag in hand. "This is a great victory for the *Resistencia*," said Alfredo

Cesar, ex-head of the National Bank and perhaps the most influential person on the contra directorate.

As it turned out, this second round of top-level cease-fire negotiations was characterized by the lack of another color—combat green. The absence of contra military leaders at the three days of peace talks clearly contributed to the lack of progress.

During the negotiations it was reported that two of the contra *comandantes* who had figured prominently in the March Sapoa talks that led to the cease-fire were expelled

from the rebel organization for supporting a negotiated settlement. Further, it was common knowledge that the contras' most important military leader, Enrique Bermudez, an ex-colonel in Anastasio Somoza's National Guard, firmly opposes any peace accord.

By sending only their political leaders, the contras were also emphasizing their long-held insistence on simultaneously talking about political substance and a military cease-fire. Just as insistently, the Sandinistas sought to keep the talks