

Salinas named Mexico's next president

MEXICO CITY—Mexico's ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) majority in Mexico's 500-seat Chamber of Deputies has railroaded through the Electoral College the ratification of PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari as Mexico's next president. The vote was 263-85, with 152 abstentions.

The Chamber's Electoral College opened the ratification process one week after a stormy protest by opposition legislators of the National Democratic Front-Mexican Socialist Party (FDN-PMS) coalition and the conservative National Action Party (PAN). The protest over alleged PRI vote fraud came during the annual September state of the nation address by outgoing President Miguel de la Madrid. PAN deputies held aloft ballots allegedly used in vote fraud and FDN-PMS legislators repeatedly interrupted de la Madrid before walking out in protest in the final moments of the presidential address.

In the early morning hours of September 9, the PRI tried to bring up a motion in the Electoral College to ratify Salinas as Mexico's next president. But the attempt ran into a brick wall of opposition when fist fights broke out between PRI and FDN-PMS deputies and the opposition stormed the podium. When it



became apparent on September 10 that sooner or later the PRI would use its majority to ratify Salinas at whatever cost, the FDN-PMS deputies again staged a walkout along with 16 PAN deputies, leaving 85 PANistas to vote against the PRI.

The PRI's determination to ratify Salinas by simple majority rather than consensus has not dispelled the doubts about the results of the July 6 presidential election raised by the

opposition parties and their presidential candidates Cuauhtemoc Cardenas (FDN-PMS) and Manuel Clouthier (PAN).

When Salinas takes office December 1, he will enter his six-year term without a clear mandate from the electorate and with lingering questions about the democratic legitimacy of his presidency.

—Mike Tangeman

Illinois passes "secret AIDS testing" law

Illinois became the first state to legislate "secret AIDS testing" September 2 when Gov. James Thompson signed legislation that repealed Illinois' "written, informed consent" requirement for administration of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) antibody test. Illinois doctors may now legally run an HIV antibody test on a patient without the patient's knowledge.

The new testing law overturns crucial portions of Illinois' AIDS Confidentiality Act, which had been considered a model piece of legislation on issues of HIV antibody testing. The measure also "raises very serious constitutional, federal and state law questions," according to Harvey Grossman, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. "We're definitely planning legal challenges," he said. "We're looking for clients right now."

In signing the measure, Gov. Thompson said he was forced to weigh individual rights against protection of the health of the community at large. He also said health-care providers would do a better job if they could be assured of a "safe work environment."

The "secret AIDS testing" measure was loudly opposed by the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Bernard Turnock, the direc-



Illinois Gov. James Thompson

tor of the Chicago Health Department, Lonnie Edwards, and by all gay and AIDS organizations in the state. All argued that the serious implications of HIV antibody testing necessitate thorough pre- and post-test counseling, as well as the option of anonymity.

The main proponent of the legislation was the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS), which in addition to its aggressive lobbying has contributed \$115,000 to Thompson's cam-

paign chest since mid-1985. It also contributed \$415,000 to the campaigns of Illinois' legislators in the most recent 12-month reporting period, according to disclosures filed with the state Board of Elections. "ISMS is the largest lobbyist in Illinois," said Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force (IGLTF) member Tim Drake. "They normally get what they want."

The secret testing measure emerged in the final two days of Illinois' most recent legislative session when conservative legislator and Presidential HIV Commission member Penny Pullen added an amendment onto other legislation. Two months later Thompson signed the legislation.

Members of IGLTF are charging that Thompson has been "blatantly bribed," and have declared September 26 "Who Owns Jim Thompson Day." The group has drafted a written contract for patients to have their physicians sign that would prohibit doctors from administering any test without written, informed consent. If doctors won't sign the contract, IGLTF leaders will advise individuals to seek out-of-state treatment.

Illinois' new one-of-a-kind "secret AIDS testing" law joins Illinois' one-of-a-kind mandatory premarital HIV antibody testing law. Louisiana, the only other state that ever required premarital testing, repealed its law earlier this year.

—Rex Wockner

Following in Bozo's footsteps

Following the Republican National Convention in New Orleans last month, Rep. William H. Gray III (D-PA) released two reports analyzing the performance of President Reagan and Vice President George Bush. Gray, chair of the House Budget Committee, pulled apart the Republicans' claims about the economy, federal budget and taxes, as well as defense and domestic spending. In his speech at the convention, Reagan "made at least 20 factual errors, misstatements or misrepresentations," according to Gray. It appears Bush is ready to follow in his leader's footsteps. Gray says Bush's acceptance speech also "contained numerous misstatements and omissions." As just one example of Bush's confusion, Gray cites the Bush claim that the Reagan administration created 17 million jobs "the majority of them paid an average...of more than \$22,000 a year." Gray says not even the administration's Bureau of Labor Statistics will defend that claim. In the eight years of the Reagan administration about 15.8 million new jobs were created, a pace slower than the job-creation rate under the Carter administration, Gray says. More than half of the new jobs of the past eight years are lower-paying service industry jobs.

No kidding

Another study finds Reagan administration programs unable to lift poor families out of poverty. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, an independent research group, says the effectiveness of government programs on the poor declined in 1987 for the sixth time in eight years. In an analysis of statistics released by the Census Bureau last month, the center says that reductions in federal and state programs are "a major cause of the increase in family poverty rates since the late '70s." Despite the Reagan administration's claims of economic growth, the Census Bureau reports that 32.5 million Americans lived under the government's official poverty line in 1987, 8 million more than in 1978. The Center's report says that if the government's programs had the same anti-poverty impact in 1987 as they had in 1979, 517,000 fewer families would be living in poverty.

Quayle calls for bondage

At a GOP rally in Springfield, Ill., last week Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. J. Danforth Quayle said the Republicans "understand the importance of having the bondage between the parent and child...." Quayle has gained a lot from his family connections, and presumably he understands that bondage better than most.

Bush blitzkrieg in the war of words

Dan Quayle proved a bit lily-livered when it came to facing an enemy like the Viet Cong, but when it comes to attacking the press he and the rest of the Bush campaign deserve medals. When the ill-equipped media corps—armed only with Quayle's questionable history—launched a mild offensive against the Indiana senator in August, the Bush forces launched a fierce counterattack. "We can't have Gestapo tactics in the media," shouted Bush aide Roger Ailes, leading the charge. It was only later that America learned how the Bush campaign knew so much about the Gestapo. This month six members of Bush's campaign committee on ethics resigned amid charges they were anti-Semitic or linked to pro-Nazi groups or activities.

Quayle stinks up the joint

A key battle in the war of words over Quayle's war record, or lack of it, came in the senator's driveway. Quayle emerged from his house, garbage in hand, to face what appeared to be a trespassing press corps employing its much-feared "Gestapo tactics," i.e., questions. To the average American, it appeared as though the poor senator was being hounded by a bunch of inconsiderate jerks who wouldn't even give him time to finish his Eggo's in the morning. It was a decisive victory for the Bush forces. Despite public impressions, however, the media had not been the bad guys in the incident; but instead had been the victim. As Geoffrey Stokes points out in the *Village Voice*, the Bush campaign had actually scheduled the trash-run as Quayle's only "press availability" of the entire day. "So what we got," Stokes points out, "was the candidate taking out his garbage...being 'ambushed' by the press, and 'cleverly' comparing certain charges to the garbage he conveniently happened to be carrying."

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

VETERAN ORGANIZER MILT COHEN, co-chair of the Chicago Voter Registration Coalition, was worried. At mid-September with a few weeks left for voter registration before the fall election, only 25,000 new Chicago voters had been added to the rolls. Since registration was down 150,000 from the peak in 1983, voter decline in November seemed inevitable. In 1984 there had been 10,000 deputy registrars at work; this year there are only 3,000.

That can't be good news for Michael Dukakis. He needs a big win in this heavily Democratic city to have a chance at taking Illinois, one of the key swing states.

If Dukakis wins this fall, a few tens of thousands of votes in several similar swing states will probably make the difference. But despite some serious efforts at voter registration underway, it seems that Dukakis and his allies have not given registration a high priority.

The campaign seems more interested in wooing undecided voters as well as Democrats who voted for Reagan.

There are conflicts between reaching Reagan Democrats and mobilizing new black voters. But an attack on economic privilege and irresponsible power coupled with a gut appeal to the needs of the average working person at least potentially unites them. Dukakis, however, seems unwilling to take that gamble.

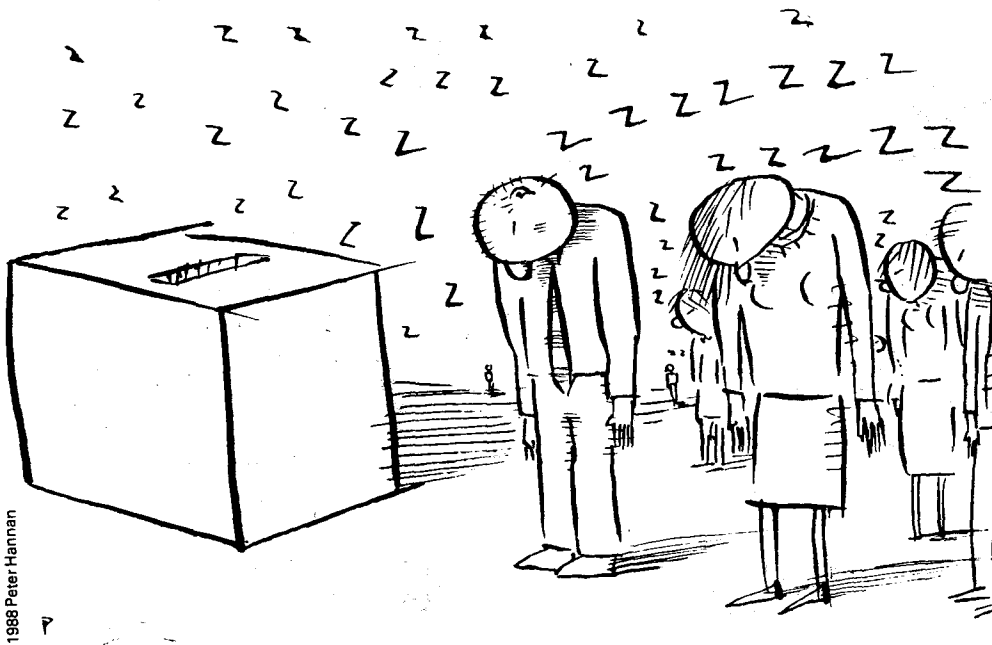
What's gone wrong? The Chicago effort suffers more from lack of volunteer enthusiasm than lack of money, but other voter registration efforts around the country report problems with money—too little or too late. Yet Rob Stein, executive director of USA Votes, a voter registration promotion committee, says resources and efforts most helpful to Democrats are similar to 1984. Despite a big push four years ago by Democrats and liberal, non-partisan groups, Republican registration nationally has risen about 2.2 percent since 1984 compared to a 2.3 percent Democratic drop, according to research done for the *National Journal*.

Last week a simmering disagreement between the Dukakis campaign and Jesse Jackson was patched up with announcement of a national program for voter registration coordinated by a Jackson ally. It will supplement voter registration to be carried out with part of the Democrats' planned \$50 million infusion into state parties.

But Frances Fox Piven, co-author with Richard Cloward of a new book, *Why Americans Don't Vote*, and a director of Human SERVE, a voter registration group, said the reconciliation was "ridiculous. You can't do voter registration if you decide to do it in mid-September." Her group has advocated voter registration through state human service agencies as a way to reach the under-registered poor. The organization's lobbying has increased the number of states where it's done. Dukakis and the Democratic Party, without using any money could have expanded such efforts, Piven said. Yet Dukakis hasn't been sympathetic to this registration strategy, even in his home state.

Furthermore, several observers said that non-partisan groups had expected Dukakis backers to channel large amounts of non-campaign money—around \$5 million—into

The Democrats' apathy about voter registration



c 1988 Peter Hannan

non-partisan voter registration after the convention. A source close to the Dukakis campaign said there had been serious intentions to do voter registration, but the money simply wasn't raised. Despite its premium on reaching party defectors of Democratic-leaning independents, the campaign did not intend that to undermine work in minority neighborhoods, the source said. Now the task will not be expanding minority votes but holding even, replacing those purged from the rolls.

Sonia Jarvis, executive director of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation (whose registration campaign is dubbed Op-

One study says GOP registration rose 2.2 percent since 1984. Democratic registration dropped 2.3 percent.

eration Big Vote), said her group had hoped to raise \$650,000, but will be lucky to reach \$500,000. "We didn't see the all-out commitment to registration we saw in 1984," she said. Project Vote, registering primarily blacks in 13 states, has about the same money as in 1984, but less than expected, said executive director Sandy Newman. The group gambled and expanded its operations—but may have to cut back this month, even though it is the time of peak voter-registration efficiency.

Containing Jackson: Several groups that focus on black voter registration report that they have had problems raising money or getting it early because some funders did not want to swell Jesse Jackson's base. "It's certainly true of some of our donors," Newman said, an observation seconded by both Jarvis and Curtis Gans of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. "But it's hard to know how big a factor that is."

Although Gans estimates that money for non-partisan registration drives is down, Stein says that in 1987-88 liberal groups doing voter registration, issue-mobilization

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and get-out-the-vote work will spend around \$8 million, compared to \$6.5 million in 1983-84. But the resources will be concentrated in 20 key states, instead of being spread over 40 as in '83-84.

Stein estimates that the work may net a million new voters. Similar efforts four years ago were said to produce 2.5 million voters, but that number is probably highly inflated. Many groups seem to be putting relatively more effort into getting out the vote, less into registration itself. But registration is targeted on key battlegrounds, with major drives in states like Texas and California, where more than \$3 million is being raised to register voters.

Modest efforts can be decisive in the right place. In the four presidential races since 1952 that did not involve an incumbent, a shift of 87,000 votes or less in a few states could have changed the outcome.

With almost as many non-voters as voters even in presidential elections, voter registration and turnout in the U.S. is a potential bombshell. What would these citizens do if they came to the polls? Why don't they vote?

What 1896 means to 1888: Piven and Cloward's recent contribution to the voluminous debate, like most predecessors, takes as the turning point the election of 1896, when business forces amassed a mighty campaign against William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate with Populist backing. Voter turnout had been rising in the late 19th century, mobilized by both "tribalism" of ethnicity and religion and "clientelism" of patronage politics as much as by civic high-mindedness, they argue. But Populists presented a novel class threat at the polls to the new industrial barons.

Piven and Cloward argue that voter participation declined steadily after 1896 not

only because competition between parties dropped as Republicans consolidated power but also because of legal changes in parties, ballots, registration procedures and other electoral institutions. These alterations included poll taxes and literacy tests. They contend that is the legacy of these institutional changes more than the special psychology of Americans that account for why U.S. eligible voter turnout is so much lower than in any comparable democracy (although the 87 percent turnout of those registered in 1980 puts the U.S. in the middle rank).

Voting restrictions have generally decreased greatly, although only recently, but they are still greater than in most of Western Europe, where registration is virtually automatic. But the two main parties have been shaped by the competition for the constricted electorate. The civil rights movement in the South upset the old New Deal party alignment, but the Democrats have had a hard time coming to terms with the change. There has often been a conflict between the electorate local Democratic officeholders favor out of their self-interest and the electorate needed by Democratic presidential contenders.

Overwhelmingly U.S. non-voters are more likely to be poor, modestly educated or black, although black and white differences in registration and voting are narrowing. Yet the steady decline in voter turnout since 1960, reversed only by a slight uptick in 1984, has affected voters across the board. In a 1987 study political scientists Ruy A. Teixeira claimed that the decline since 1960 in voter participation stemmed from decreased sense of political efficacy, less rootedness in a community and declining involvement in campaigns. Piven, on the other hand, stresses the decreased interest or ability of big city political organizations or unions to mobilize voters as causes of the decline.

Gans argues that the problem is motivation, not registration. But Project Vote claims that once it got its poor black constituents registered, 82 to 87 percent went to the polls. A State University of New York study showed 70 percent of welfare office voter registrants actually voted.

Would unregistered be Democrats? The poor are more Democratic. But even if a higher percentage of them are registered, they wouldn't necessarily vote according to their economic or class interests. Yet, Piven maintains that "if you eliminate formal barriers, you'd have a surge in participation, and that might very well change the character of the political parties." Gans, on the other hand, says it depends on who gets registered. New ethnic white low-income voters could go Republican "given no common-man class advocacy on the part of the Democratic Party."

Despite some studies that show few differences in candidate preference between non-voters and voters, one academic study concluded that if non-voters had come to the polls in 1980 Carter would have won, but they wouldn't have saved Mondale in 1984.

Ultimately the give-and-take of political battle for the non-voters, the development of themes and organizations, will decide which way they go. But the Dukakis campaign clearly has not chosen that challenge. This year non-voters will probably stay home in the same large numbers. They will still be waiting for someone to bring them in. □