

Manatt uses Chicago election against party

by Stephen Parsons

The national leadership of the Democratic Party narrowly avoided a humiliating defeat April 12 in the Chicago mayoral election when Democratic nominee Harold Washington squeaked to a razor-thin victory over Republican Bernard Epton. Washington won by just 40,000 votes and garnered barely 52 percent of the vote, in an election where the Democratic candidate usually sails into office.

The Democratic National Committee and its chairman, Charles Manatt, had thrown all its resources into the Washington campaign, hosting numerous fundraisers outside Chicago and sending troupes of party officials into the city. Although DNC Chairman Manatt is taking much of the credit for Washington's victory, local leaders have noted that this parade of unpopular personalities probably drove more votes away from Washington than it gained, and further fractured the already bitterly divided local party organization.

The destruction of Chicago's Democratic machine in this election was not a side effect unintended by Manatt and the DNC. The Democratic leadership, and Manatt in particular, are committed to ending the party's national role as the constituency-based institution built up by Franklin D. Roosevelt to represent the community of interests among labor, business, and minorities.

The stage was set in the February mayoral primary, when Manatt and company gave orders to defraud LaRouche Democrat Sheila Jones of all but a handful of her expected 15-20 percent vote total, and thus remove from the election any discussion of crucial policy issues.

The racial confrontation between black Democrat Washington and white Republican Epton was set up when corrupt elements in the Justice Department, FBI, and Republican and Democratic leaderships moved into Chicago to ensure "a fair vote" in the primary (see *EIR*, March 15). They proceeded to issue scores of indictments against local Democratic machine officials and threatened legal action against countless others, to ensure that incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne and former Mayor Richard Daley's son would lose to Washington. It was these operations that further blew apart the Cook County machine, which, under Mayor Daley, was a tightly knit, nationally powerful organization.

A little-known political hack, as a congressman Washington has been one of the leading advocates of the nuclear freeze, and campaigned for mayor with "civil rights" rhetoric thinly disguising his "post-industrial" orientation.

Washington was best known for ending his campaign rallies with the extraordinary militant call: "Brothers and sisters, let's get about the business of raising taxes now." This doubtless reflected the fact that he was the beneficiary of an outpouring of financial support from some very prestigious Wall Street investment firms and wealthy individuals like Rockefeller in-law Mark Dayton—not to mention hefty contributions from organized crime-connected figures ranging from Tom Hayden to Christie Hefner.

Washington's early endorsement by presidential hopeful Alan Cranston represented an attempt by the post-industrial planners to fuse the radical environmentalist freeze movement with a segment of the black political apparatus.

That segment promotes a domestic version of "militant third-worldist" policies for "sharing" a drastically shrinking economic pie in a time of world depression; its members range from trained counterinsurgents like Jesse Jackson and campaign manager Al Raby, to more sophisticated types like Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young. These people interface with the local media manipulation apparatus, which is largely controlled by Don Rose. Rose is the mentor of various Washington staffers, including Ron Dorfman and Dave Kanter; Kanter was the translator during the 1959 U-2 affair, and has links to Khomeini partisan Marvin Zonis at the University of Chicago.

While Bernard Epton fanned racial flames in the election—as typified in his slogan, "Epton for Mayor, Before it's Too Late"—Manatt had a California public relations firm tailor a complementary racist campaign for Washington. This firm, Zimmerman, Galanty and Fiman, ran Tom Hayden's multi-million-dollar campaign last year for California state assembly, as well as that state's nuclear freeze initiative. Its racist strategy for Chicago was to ensure an 80 percent turnout of the black vote for Washington so that he would need only 20 percent or less of the white vote.

Washington threatened the life-blood of the Democratic organization by repeatedly promising to end the constituency-based patronage system—the system of appointing loyal party workers to city jobs. Under this threat, even more than because of race, at least eight Democratic ward leaders endorsed Epton, with others withholding active support from Washington.

While Washington takes a conciliatory post-election stance, his victory has spurred a drive by so-called party militants like Jesse Jackson to launch a 1984 black presidential candidacy within the Democratic Party. Jackson has taken the up-front role, but party leaders close to Averell Harriman think Andrew Young could well emerge.

Such a drive would tend to further fragment the party along racial lines and focus the electorate on issues of race rather than policy. "This portends more racial polarization and populism in the political process," said insurgency specialist Richard Falk of Princeton University, a Khomeini promoter. "The blacks would be a power bloc, a threat. They could decide to split out."