

Eye on Democrats by Donald Baier

Manatt a no-show at California Democratic shambles

Democratic National Committee chairman Charles Manatt, who was advertised as a featured speaker, didn't even show up for the midterm party convention in his home state on Feb. 3-4. Apparently unwilling to make an exhibition of himself by delivering a "lost cause" speech entitled "Democrat and Proud of It," Manatt left the job to an underling, DNC executive director Michael Steed, who droned on while bored central committee members walked out.

Maybe Manatt's no-show was really his wisest course. The California State Midterm Platform Convention meeting in Oakland, California also voted up a humiliating rejection of Manatt's leadership, when it approved a formula for delegate selection to the national convention paralleling that of Jesse Jackson and repudiating the Manatt line.

To say the Manatt machine in California is demoralized would be an understatement. The most enthusiastic applause went to ex-governor Jerry Brown, whose keynote remarks castigated absent delegates for staying out on the town too late and consuming too much alcohol the night before, thereby missing out on Brown's "how to be a winner" homilies. Brown's most recent political achievement was losing a race for U.S. senator, while guiding his political protégé Tom Hayden (Mr. Jane Fonda) to a narrow victory in a contest for state assembly, at a cost of only \$1 or \$2 million. Hayden's big moment in Oakland

came with his ringing declaration on behalf of the terrorist Irish Republican Army, which he pleaded should be allowed to "enrich political life" in the United States.

No wonder as few as half the 1,300 Democrats eligible to attend the convention bothered to show up.

Among those who did, for the most part, anti-Reagan demogogy was the order of the day. But it took on a certain wistful character, as if delegates were already resigning themselves to the idea that the same Moscow-allied Harrimanite Eastern Establishment that had forced them to swallow Jimmy Carter in 1980 would make them losers again.

Visiting Rep. Pat Schroeder of Colorado won loud applause when she called Reagan "Teflon coated . . . nothing sticks"—meaning the Dems don't think the "warmonger" "rich man's candidate" tags pushed by the Harrimanites, *Pravda*, and *Izvestia*, can be sold to the voters.

Throughout the convention delegates were constantly overheard saying, "Reagan is really strong and popular, it's going to be a tough race." Reflecting this pessimism, Rep. Don Edwards, the ex-FBI agent who was crowned "the prince of the California delegation" by a fellow speaker, said "If we can't carry California, perhaps we don't deserve to be Democratic leaders."

The LaRouche alternative

The bright spot in the convention proceedings was the appearance of an alternative leadership associated with the policies of presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. The LaRouche forces, whom the Manattmen spent four full days prior to the convention doing their best to lock away from access to their fellow Democrats, were out in force, and polarized the convention. Because California Secretary of State March Fong Eu had officially recog-

nized LaRouche as a Democratic presidential candidate Feb. 1 and placed him on the California primary ballot, it was impossible for Manatt's henchmen to oust the LaRouche candidates and organizers, who lobbied actively all over the convention.

On Saturday morning, the opening of the general session, attendees were greeted by a 35-man picket line which drew much attention. Chants included: "Henry Kissinger, Charlie Manatt: We can smell a KGB Rat." "To end a depression and world war, back LaRouche in '84."

In addition to distributing the text of LaRouche's two national television broadcasts, the LaRouche forces circulated two amendment-resolutions to a party platform that was a grab bag of proposals to special interest groups. One LaRouche amendment mandated the deletion of the existing plank on "World Peace and International Relations," and its replacement with a proposal for the development of a national defense emergency mobilization to develop anti-missile beam weapons as the only path to peace. Although about 150 delegates had expressed support for such a proposal in 1983, before President Reagan partially adopted it as policy, few were courageous enough to support it now.

The second LaRouche proposal addressed the plank on Economic Justice and International Trade, proposing to delete the Manatt wing's support for the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which enforce genocidal austerity and depopulation on nations around the world. Instead the LaRouche plank offered a complete international monetary and debt reorganization, simultaneous with the issuance of new gold-backed credit to industrialize the developing nations and create millions of new jobs each year in U.S. export industries. One hundred thirty-five delegates signed this resolution—short of the 250 needed to have it considered and voted on as an amendment.