

## Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

### All eyes on Texas

In the week of Sept. 17 the *Houston Chronicle*, one of the two major papers in Texas' largest city, ran a headline saying that the Mondale-Ferraro campaign has given up on the state of Texas.

All hell broke loose in the press rooms of the Democratic party.

The fact is, that if Walter Mondale does not take Texas, there is no way that he can have even a chance of winning the November election. For Mondale to concede defeat in Texas is the equivalent of telling the troops to call off the battle right now.

Texas has 26 electoral votes, and as a Southern state, has traditionally been Democratic territory. All this changed in the 1980 elections. Fed up to the gills with the anti-industrial lunacy of the Jimmy Carter-Mondale administration, Texas Democrats voted en masse for Ronald Reagan, and then proceeded to move into the Republican party as well. Despite the disasters which have occurred under the Reagan administration, that anti-Carter/anti-Mondale sentiment has not disappeared.

But Mondale has *not* conceded Texas, his campaign aides hastened to correct the *Houston Chronicle*. Since that time Mondale has been in the state at least once. But to take a look at the party's situation in the state, they might as well have.

### Fiasco in Dallas

September 7 and 8 were set as the kickoff dates for the party's electoral drive. Those were the dates of the Texas State Democratic Party convention, called for the huge convention center in Dallas. Geared as a big morale-booster, the convention was the opposite. Less than 3,000 of the 11,000 delegates and alternates chose

to show up. The biggest celebrity there was Walter Mondale's sedentary son, William.

In one respect, the Texas party leadership didn't mind. The lack of turnout gave party boss Bob Slagle the ability to ram through, or defeat, just about any resolution that he wanted to. One of the most flagrant cases was the vote to lower the "percentage threshold" required to qualify delegates to the Democratic convention from 15 to 10%—a measure in much demand especially among black Democrats as a means of allowing greater equality.

Slagle demanded that this vote, as many others, be a voice vote only. Although the threshold reform was clearly cried up, Slagle arbitrarily declared it voted down.

When he tried the same thing on the next vote, he was finally challenged from the floor. In a "stand-up count," he clearly lost.

Slagle was also unsuccessful in totally suppressing a challenge to his position as state chair by Nicholas Benton of the National Democratic Policy Committee. Benton addressed the agricultural, non-urban, and Mexican-American caucuses. When Slagle's flunkies tried to drown out Benton's call for a repudiation of Mondale and endorsement of Independent Democrat Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., they were drowned out by others who intensified their applause.

The vulgarity of the entire affair was evident in Slagle's choice of entertainment. He welcomed to the stage a homosexual "avant-garde" group called "Women Against Ladies," which put on a thoroughly tasteless parody of Republican women.

### Manatt brings in the \$

It was none other than Charlie "The Tuna" Manatt who came into the state

to try to pick up the pieces the next week. Manatt announced that the Democratic Party was going to spend a lot of money in Texas. In other words, Charlie was announcing that he hoped Texas Democrats were up for sale.

He did reveal that local black traditionalist politician Al Edwards, formerly Jesse Jackson's statewide campaign chief, had agreed to accept a state chairmanship and national vice-chairmanship of the Mondale campaign—despite the fact that Edwards had, up until that moment, refused to even follow Jesse Jackson's lead in endorsing the national ticket! This was an especially important victory for the Manatt-Mondale leadership—since the blacks in the Texas party are very disaffected. Well over 50% of the 80,000 Democrats who signed the nominating petitions for Lyndon LaRouche were blacks, for example.

Manatt's press conference, held Sept. 15, was ostensibly called to introduce local congressional candidates. Most of them, however, refused to show up, and Manatt wasn't too happy about one of them who did.

On hand to greet Manatt was Bill Willibey, a LaRouche Democrat running in the 7th Congressional District. Willibey, of course, does not support the Mondale ticket; no patriotic American would. Instead, he has thrown in his lot with the independent candidacy of Lyndon LaRouche. LaRouche is the only alternative to Mondale and Reagan on the Texas presidential ballot.

Seeing that Willibey was present, Manatt and his pal Slagle, decided not to introduce any congressional candidates. But one reporter let out the real story as to why not. It appears that *four* members of the Texas Congressional slate—Ralph Hall, Sam Hall, Charlie Wilson, and Bill Willibey—have all refused to support the presidential ticket!