

¡Viva Cinco de Mayo!

Throughout the Southwest and in every city with a large Chicano/Mexicano community, people will be celebrating Cinco de Mayo (May 5). It is a day which celebrates Chicano/Mexicano culture and heritage. The date itself refers to the historic battle on May 5, 1862, in Puebla, Mexico. On that day, invading French colonial troops suffered a major defeat at the hands of the courageous Mexican army, made up largely of Indian peasants and led by President Benito Juárez, a Zapotec.

This same struggle for self-determination continues today in Mexico and in the Chicano nation in the Southwestern U.S. The electoral arena is one front. In Mexico's presidential elections this July, an unprecedented movement is unfolding against the ruling PRI and U.S. domination of the country's political and economic life. And here in the U.S., Chicanos are organizing to oust Reaganism from the White House in November.

Redress and reparations now!

In 1942, 120,000 Japanese Americans were rounded up and thrown into U.S. concentration camps for the duration of World War II, based solely on their race and nationality. As innocent victims of a racist wartime climate, the Japanese Americans lost homes, jobs, farmlands and human dignity. The Japanese American community broke the silence a decade ago by publicly testifying to the enormous injustice of the camps, and calls were raised for redress and reparations.

Due to the perseverance of the Japanese American community, both houses of Congress have finally passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1987. The measure calls for a long-overdue official apology and a token payment of \$20,000 to each survivor of the camps. Though nothing can compensate for their suffering, many Japanese Americans believe that redress and reparations can help prevent the U.S. government from committing a similar injustice in the future. Now it is up to President Reagan to sign the bill, and to act upon it without further delay.

Memorial

C.B. King, 1924-1988

Attorney C.B. King died March 15, 1988, in a hospital in San Diego. C.B. King's career was a demonstration of commitment to the African American people's struggle for freedom.

In 1961, in Albany, Georgia, when SCLC and SNCC organizers were struggling for respect and desegregation, he was himself beaten on the courthouse steps by the county sheriff, who stated he wanted to "prove that he was still a 'nigger.'" C.B. King shocked the white power elite of Georgia when, in 1968, he ran for governor in a time when Lester Maddox and other segregationists still controlled the Georgia Democratic Party.

C.B. King was a people's lawyer who cannot be replaced but whose contributions and inspiration will not die.

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In this corner

BILL GALLEGOS

Chicanos and

1 988 will be remembered as the year Jesse Jackson gave America hope and momentum in the struggle for democracy, in this land of white supremacy and corporate domination. Jackson's message has struck a responsive chord among Latinos in the U.S., and already he has won many Chicano votes in Texas, a majority of the Chicano vote in Colorado and southern Arizona, and 61% of the Latino vote in New York.

On June 7, California and New Mexico, states with large Chicano populations, will hold their primaries. And the Chicano vote will play a critical role. Jackson's program and his consistent support for the Chicano struggle make him the best choice for the Chicano people, and our best alternative to the devastating right-wing policies of the Reagan/Bush administration.

A fight for democracy

The heart and soul of the Jackson campaign is the democratic struggle of the African American people, and of the African American nation in the Blackbelt South. As Chicanos, we have much in common with the African American people. Jesse Jackson expresses it by saying, "One people enslaved against their will, another annexed against their will."

Indeed, the 15-18 million Chicanos and Mexicanos, living mainly in the Southwest, are a conquered people whose lands were forcibly annexed by the U.S. in 1848, and whose conquest was consolidated through the terror of the Ku Klux Klan and Texas Rangers. Chicano lands were stolen, Chicano miners were burned alive in their mines, and Chicano farmers were the "strange fruit" of the Southwestern hanging trees. Spanish was outlawed, Chicanos were not allowed to hold government office. This legacy of conquest continues today in a poverty rate

JESSE JACKSON and the '88 ELECTIONS

FORWARD

SPRING '88

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- Toney Anaya, former governor of New Mexico;
- Ken Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees

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Jesse Jackson

of more than 24% and a drop-out rate of 50%+. It continues in the racist English-only movement, migra raids, and plantation conditions of the farm workers.

The Jackson campaign is the *only* one which speaks to these issues, which recognizes this history, and which offers the hope that together, we can turn this country around.

Furthermore, Jackson has consistently stood with the Chicano people. He stood with striking Phelps Dodge miners in Arizona in the mid-'80s, with the Watsonville cannery workers strike in 1986, and at the 1984 Democratic National Convention he called for support for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Campbells boycott. He marched at the border to demand rights for the undocumented, and with MEChA in the April '87 March on Sacramento for Education. He has given leadership to the battle against drugs, and in '88, he travelled to the *colonias* of South Texas, speaking out against the racist English-only

movement, and for immigrant rights, Latino empowerment, education and jobs with decent pay, and for peace in Central America.

Jackson has won the support of teatro/film director Luis Valdez, recording artists Carlos Santana and Little Joe Hernández, U.S. Congressman Robert Garcia, Arizona State Senator Jesus "Chuy" Higuera, former New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya, California Assemblyman Peter Chacon and thousands of Chicano and Latino voters. As Mario Obledo, former president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, puts it, "Jesse Jackson has stood with us. Now it is time for us to stand with him."

Black-Chicano unity

The Jackson campaign is helping to strengthen Black-Chicano unity in

History Teaches Us
that We Learn Nothing
from History....



MATT WUERKER, L.A. WEEKLY

the electoral arena — an alliance which is key to transforming the Sunbelt from a mecca for the large corporations and a bastion for reactionary forces like Jesse Helms and Barry Goldwater. For there are 30 million African Americans and 23 million Latinos in the U.S. today, and a majority live in the Sunbelt states of the South and Southwest.

Black-Chicano solidarity has a long history too. Juan Cortina, who led an armed struggle for Chicano liberation in South Texas in the 1850's, fought against the Southern slavocracy in the

Civil War. And the Black Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s broke down the same barriers to voting rights and empowerment that Chicanos faced throughout the Southwest.

Together, as part of a broad rainbow movement inspired by the Jackson campaign, we can kick the far right out of the White House, put the Chicano political agenda sharply before the U.S. electorate, and further the struggle for democracy for *all* the people. Now is the time.

¡Si se puede!

¡Qué viva Jesse Jackson!

Panama: The view from 'America's Backyard'

It was reported April 29 that the Reagan administration made a deal with Gen. Manuel Noriega to get him to step down as Panama's military commander, by backing off White House demands that he leave Panama. All this was done secretly, without consulting Panamanian leaders, and is further evidence of U.S. disregard for Panamanian sovereignty — (ed.).

Carlos A. Williams

Contributed

Panamanians, Latin Americans, have always resented the indignity of being referred to as "America's backyard."

It is a euphemism in direct contradiction with our sovereignty, for it implies ownership, servant quarters, the back door to the household. It reflects American policy in Latin America for more than 100 years.

Latin Americans live and die with a wary eye towards the United States. It is an uneasy existence. Americans have used military force to intervene in Panama's internal affairs on four occasions. Central Americans have suffered the indignity of America's intervention 75 times. José Martí, the principal figure in Cuba's independence from Spain, needed America's support

to achieve that independence, but warned: "They (the Americans) expect that as Cuba falls from Spain's tree the fruit will land in their lap." These poor nations are among the world's largest debtors, primarily to American banks. The penalty for falling out of step is political isolation, economic boycott, the freezing of assets and/or armed intervention, not necessarily in that order.

In little more than a month, the U.S. indicted General Noriega, recognized the ousted President Del Valle, cut off aid to Panama, seized Panamanian assets in this country, ordered the cessation of payments due Panama from the Panama Canal, voted unanimously to continue economic sanctions and will now order corporations doing business in Panama to stop making tax payments to the Panamanian government. The United States government managed to cripple Panama's economy without firing a single shot. The U.S. now holds a gun not only to Noriega's head, but at the heads of two million Panamanians. What is the basis for such swift and massive action against a sovereign nation? How does it compare with the U.S. inaction in South Africa, Chile, and Guatemala?

For years, there has been massive support for economic sanctions against South Africa. The United States, particularly the Reagan administration, ve-

hemently opposed any sanction, and then only imposed a minor sanction after he was forced to succumb to public outcry. The military in Panama, no doubt, has faults, but they pale in comparison to the dictatorship in Chile, or Haiti and Guatemala, which conducted a reign of terror against their citizens, all in the face of a silent U.S. Silent, no doubt, because these dictators advanced American interest. If there was no cause for sanctions, then what is the case for sanctions against Panama.

The reasons offered by the U.S. are: 1) Noriega has been indicted, in America, on charges of drug trafficking; 2) ousted president Del Valle is the constitutionally-elected president of Panama. It is widely acknowledged that Panama is not a producer of cocaine. The Medellín Cartel, the world's largest producer and exporter of drugs, is based in Colombia. Not a single sanction has been issued against Colombia.

Government officials allege that they knew of Noriega's involvement with drugs more than three years ago and that the late CIA director, William Casey, stopped any action against him because Noriega was their man. It is much more plausible to believe Noriega no longer towed the line, or worse, that he played both sides. Noriega is a stalwart defender of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. This clearly

makes him a sinner in the eyes of the Reagan administration. The drug connection is clearly a mere pretext for some other objective.

The constitutionality of Del Valle's presidency is the weakest of the reasons given. Although he is said to be the constitutionally-elected president, Del Valle was removed by a constitutionally-elected Panamanian legislature for alleged violation of the Panamanian Constitution. The only body with the authority to decide that issue is the highest court in Panama, not the U.S. government. The U.S. simply hand-picked Mr. Del Valle because he provided them with some legal excuse to seize Panamanian funds in this country.

The United States' actions thus far threaten the economic life of Panama. In a sense it amounts to a declaration of war. Juan B. Sosa, representative of Del Valle, has called for armed intervention to restore Del Valle to the Presidency. The American government may choose to answer that call and, in so doing, lives on both sides may be lost. Panama may suffer the indignity of yet another intervention into its internal affairs, and America's democracy will sound yet another hollow note for another generation of Latin Americans.

Carlos A. Williams is a Panamanian now living in the U.S.