



Many people who participated in the Rainbow Coalition are ready to stay active around the issues raised by the Jackson campaign.

# Rainbow Readies For San Francisco and Beyond

By Frances M. Beal

The Democratic Party primary season has come to an end, but the Jesse Jackson campaign is far from over.

Most immediately, Jackson strategists are preparing to bring the Rainbow Coalition's peace and justice program to bear at the Democratic National Convention this July. But Jackson's concerns stretch far beyond San Francisco; plans are already afoot to impact the general elections next fall and to institutionalize the Rainbow Coalition as an ongoing force on the national political landscape.

The first order of business, however, is to take on the Democratic Party establishment. To this end, Jackson is reaching out beyond the 373 delegates that he already won in the primaries. The most important breakthrough in this regard was the agreement among members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)—even those pledged to other candidates—that Jackson has legitimate concerns about the discriminatory impact of current party rules. CBC members have also expressed support for Jackson's challenge to run-off primaries, gerrymandering, at-large rather than district-wide representation and dual registration schemes.

The CBC has also agreed to try to hammer out a common agenda on certain domestic and international aspects of the Jackson program. Emerging from the meeting with Jackson, CBC head Julian Dixon (D-Calif.) noted the caucus' commitment to "bring about an agenda for the 1984 convention that will not only address platform issues but will address the issue of fairness as it relates to the 1984 election."

To head off what is emerging as added support for Jackson's demands on the credentials, rules and platform committees, Mondale strategists have responded by trying to undermine Jackson's stature as the voice of Black Democrats during the convention. Jackson has charged state party leaders who support Mondale with attempting to appoint a number of Black Mondale supporters to at-large and uncommitted delegate seats. Jackson called this tactic a "manipulation" of the democratic process, designed to obscure the fact that he defeated Mondale by a 4-to-1 ratio among Black voters in the primaries.

## RAINBOW WORKSHOP

To ensure that the Jackson forces are well prepared to impact the convention,

campaign leaders have scheduled a "Rainbow Coalition Workshop" in Chicago on June 29. The invitation-only gathering will include Jackson delegates, the local co-chairs and coordinators of Jackson campaign committees and "a selected list of Rainbow forces."

This appears to be the first step in institutionalizing the Rainbow Coalition as a continuing force in national politics. Jack O'Dell, international affairs director of PUSH and consultant to the Jackson campaign, told *Frontline*, "The Rainbow Coalition exists and it has played a key role in bringing us this far in Jesse Jackson's candidacy. This workshop is aimed at preparing the delegation for the San Francisco convention as well as discussing how to broaden and expand the Rainbow Coalition's activities be-

tween July and November around a certain structure of state organization."

A number of concrete mechanisms for maintaining the Rainbow Coalition as an independent political voice have already been suggested. Ongoing voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives have been mentioned as possible activities, as well as taking up local issues that correspond to the perspective of peace and justice. As O'Dell told *Frontline*, "Our theory is that work will keep the Rainbow Coalition together. Rather than let a vacuum set in, people who participated in the Jackson campaign during the primaries are wondering what they should be doing from the time of the close of the convention until November. The Rainbow Workshop will discuss this and arrive at a consensus on what needs to be done and where the focus ought to be."

## PUSH Convention

# 'America, a People's Rainbow'

By Vicki Baldassano

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Annual Convention of PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), held June 5-9 in Washington, D.C., drew 2,500 people under the theme "America, a People's Rainbow." PUSH members from the East Coast and Midwestern states dealt with a broad range of issues—each of the four conference days focused on a specific theme—with special events rounding out an agenda that ranged from Black economic empowerment to U.S. foreign policy.

But the key underlying concern of convention participants was the future of the Rainbow Coalition and the continued relationship between Black America and the Democratic Party. Speakers expressed this concern in a variety of ways on Thursday, "Political Empowerment Day."

"We are the difference this year," said Dr. Lavonia Allison, a panelist from North Carolina. "The Democratic Party will fall . . . unless they stand with us." Arnold Pinkney, national campaign manager of the Jesse Jackson campaign, said that "any [Democratic platform] agenda that does not include our candidate is an agenda doomed for failure in November."

Thursday evening Jackson himself summarized the demands he will bring

before the Democratic National Convention in July to an enthusiastic audience of PUSH members: "Party justice must precede party unity," Jackson said. "Anything short of justice as the foundation of our relationship within the Democratic Party" would be unacceptable.

Jackson then issued several "challenges" to the party, which he described as "therapy and a formula for victory in 1984." First, he reasserted his demand that the party "end all schemes to discourage political participation and adopt the principle of one person, one vote" for delegate selection.

Jackson also declared that "the Democratic Party must learn the lesson of reciprocal voting—if Blacks and Hispanics vote for whites, then whites must vote for Blacks and Hispanics." But, he noted, "not one white member of the House of Representatives, not one white U.S. Senator, not one governor, not one major or minor daily newspaper that is white, . . . not one major white candidate endorsed my candidacy. Yet they are the first to urge me to fall in line behind another white candidate. It's dangerous to be that disconnected from a source of power that you may need before the sun comes up again," he said.

Jackson ended his speech with a warning that the future of the Democratic Party depends on the disenfranchised, particularly minorities, in America. "There's a

While the electoral arena, of necessity, takes center stage at this time, the Jackson campaign is also trying to maintain its activist orientation. The most recent expression of this is Jackson's call for a mass mobilization at the U.S.-Mexico border at the beginning of July. The purpose of the demonstration, according to Jackson, is to "extend the hands of friendship to our neighbors to the South." Jackson's plan to visit Cuba at the invitation of the Havana government is further indication that Jackson plans to maintain himself as a national political figure prepared to go well beyond the traditional boundaries of mainstream politics in the U.S.

Jackson supporters will be taking this positive orientation into the June 29 workshop. "People entered the Rainbow Coalition not only on the basis of Jesse Jackson's candidacy," stated O'Dell, "but on the basis of the platform that he stood for on domestic and international issues." An ongoing organizational mechanism for the Rainbow Coalition, O'Dell noted, would be a "vehicle for educating and mobilizing the public and expanding the base of understanding on those issues that Jackson stands for."

## AFTER NOVEMBER

While detailed plans for the June 29 meeting have not yet been released, one point on the agenda will be how to build a state-by-state Rainbow structure for the elections and beyond. Some form of minimal organization is expected to be established at the workshop. And in order to broaden participation in an organized way, O'Dell noted, "There might very well be a call for a national Rainbow Coalition conference either later this year or early in 1985."

The significance of the Rainbow Coalition emerging as an ongoing organization should not be underestimated. Even in the amorphous form it had during the primary season, the Rainbow Coalition managed to inject an advanced set of politics onto the national scene. With organization, the potential for further gains in both work at the polls and grass-roots organizing is vastly increased. Creating a nationwide progressive political formation—that can impact both the Democratic Party and forces outside of it—is a key step toward the emergence of an independent political voice that objectively speaks not only to the interests of the Black masses, but to the strategic interests of the working class as a whole. □

danger in rejecting the poor and impoverished . . . America be careful about who you reject," he said.

## WEEK OF EVENTS

The conference's attention to Black politics was complemented by a wide-ranging agenda that filled a week of PUSH-organized events. Tuesday's workshops highlighted religious and educational concerns of the Black community. Wednesday was devoted to "Women on the Rise" with a particular focus on Black women's economic empowerment. Wednesday's agenda also featured PUSH's director of international affairs Jack O'Dell speaking on U.S. intervention in Central America and the Middle East.

Friday focused on Business, Economics and Labor. An afternoon workshop dealt with trade and economic development of America and Africa and included ambassadors and representatives from Algeria, the Sudan, Malawi and Upper Volta. At a press conference that day, Jesse Jackson announced that PUSH has signed economic "covenants" with seven major corporations that guarantee jobs, scholarships and contracts to benefit minority-owned firms.

The final day of the conference featured an address by Nation of Islam National Representative Louis Farrakhan and a concert with Lionel Richie. □