



JERRY GOLDBERG

Billy Mills left to right

There is a Los Angeles City Councilman named Billy Mills who used to have some very good liberal credentials. In fact, there was even a time when he was considered possibly the militant of the three black members of the City Council.

The reeducation of Billy Mills started about six years ago when he decided a black man could and should replace Supervisor Kenneth Hahn. He found a great deal of unrest about the Hahn tenure among the social worker's union and several other union people within county government.

He got a pledge for support from the Los Angeles Newspaper Guild when he agreed to put in an anti-strikebreaker ordinance to counter the bringing of strikebreakers into town by the *Herald-Examiner*.

A very good lobby job was carried on by reporter members of the guild who were able to twist some very unwilling arms. They had the eight votes necessary to get the bill passed. Suddenly, Sigmund Arywitz, executive secretary of the County Federation of Labor, came to the guild leadership and said to lay off the councilman because the vote might embarrass some of "labor's friends."

This was very confusing to Billy Mills who thought he was helping labor. It was more confusing when he discovered that Hahn wasn't willing to be as friendly to his friends in labor. Later, Mills started seeing a strange picture of discrimination within the building trades and fire fighting union which gave him even more cause to doubt. Then he ran for Congress with the same exceptional record for liberal causes. The liberals went elsewhere and the councilman had a change of heart. He refused to endorse George McGovern and has been voting the conservative line on the Council ever since.

Word has it that he is voting conservatively because he has a promise from the governor that he will be made a judge. The promise was apparently made several months ago with little action seen since that time. He has at least been appointed by Reagan to a major statewide body working in the criminal justice field.

It is very difficult to understand the difference between the words and actions of Assemblyman Walter Karabian. For several years, the Monterey Park Democrat has been touting the women's movement theme. He has also been a great defender of the down-trodden Spanish-surname. He was very happy in this role until the last several weeks when he chickened out of the attorney general's race, announcing his intention of running against two very competent women — March Fong and Cathy O'Neil. His good friend and leader of the Spanish-speaking community, Herman Sillas, also happens to be in the contest.

Last week some of the backroom wheeling and dealing used by Karabian and his close associate Assemblyman Richard Allatorre to get Sillas out of the race started to surface. Both Karabian and Allatorre disclaim any wrongdoing. There certainly was no illegal action; however, there is a question of the morality of the attempts to buy or scare Sillas out of the race. Everybody knows politics is a dirty game, but when the "Knight on the Big White Horse" does something terrible, it's shocking.

Assemblyman Frank Holoman apparently intends to use a series of hearings of his joint subcommittee on community development, being held just before election day, as an instrument to get the publicity he needs to win the new state senate seat in his area. The hearings will deal with the role of state government in developing local and regional financial plans. An ideal issue when inflation and the job gap very well will be the major issue of the spring campaign, in addition to Watergate, energy and "putting faith back into government."

Speaking of dirty pool, the Republicans are all aghast over the maltreatment of Newton Russell by Mike Antonovich. Both of their districts were merged with the recent reapportionment. Russell has been a loyal party supporter for years. He avoided getting into a Congressional seat he might have taken when Barry Goldwater Jr. filed for the job. He is well liked in Republican circles because he has really attempted to avoid the battles which could have torn apart the minority party in California.

Most of the party regulars feel Antonovich should have moved to Lancaster, leaving the district to Russell who has been representing most of it for 10 years. Antonovich has only represented the district for a year.

The flack from the primary battle, along with the Watergate blues, might very well bring this conservative Democratic registration district back into the Democratic fold.

During the past two weeks, the *Free Press* has been playing musical chairs with several members of the Los Angeles Community College Board. It stems from the removal of a *Free Press* newsrack from the Pierce College campus. Dr. Monroe Richman, Dr. Ralph Richardson and Arthur Bronson have each assured the *Free Press* of their enthusiastic support for the rights of a newspaper under the First Amendment. Apparently, the dean of students is the one who doesn't believe in the First Amendment. He claims nobody on the campus wants the paper. To date, the *Free Press* has discovered that all three gentlemen talk big with a very small stick.

The RTD has been playing the same game with the El Monte station. In this case, the RTD simply forgets to answer *Free Press* communications. Also mad at the *Free Press* is Granada Hills Hospital which got upset over something in our medical series. □

19 DEAD IN BLYTHE

School buses built-in death traps

STEVE RAND

How many California children will be driven to school tomorrow morning in what one member of the U.S. Senate has described as "a veritable death trap"?

Does the same fate await them as that of the 19 New Mexico children who died a horrible death in a school bus crash in 1971?

These queries became pertinent in recent weeks when U.S. Senator Charles H. Percy, R-Ill., made public on the Senate floor the results of an investigation into the Jan. 15, 1974 bus tragedy near Blythe, Calif., which took the lives of 19 farm workers and injured more than two dozen others in the crowded bus that morning. The bus, which was intended to carry no more than 44 persons on this occasion, held 47 men, women and children.

Tin Coffin?

In his speech, Sen. Percy called such buses "tin cans"; but over the years, farm workers have had a more descriptive and, as it turned out, a more accurate name for them — they called them "coffins." On altogether too many occasions in California's past, that is precisely what they have turned out to be.

According to the California Highway Patrol in 1972 and 1973, there were 42 accidents involving farm labor buses — the same type as those used to transport school children — and injuries were sustained in 17 of them.

The "death trap" bus had a 1955 body manufactured by Ward Schoolbus Manufacturing Co. of Conway, Ark., which was placed on a General Motors frame. About one-fourth of all school buses in the United States are manufactured by this firm.

Bus company president, Charles D. Ward, has been credited by Sen Percy's staffers, and in interviews, with vainly pressing the U.S. Department of Transportation for stronger safety rules on all buses. To do so unilaterally, he has said, would place an undue economic burden on his firm and would make it lose out in bids for new bus orders.

California the Worst

California practices are worse than those of any other states, he has said. As a result, it has more older and unsafe buses than any of the other states, Ward charged. While some other states require replacement of school buses after eight years, California encourages school districts to maintain their buses for at least 15 years, thereby fully paying off the value of the vehicles.

"Many California buses are 30 years old," Ward explained in a press interview. "If the government started requiring more emergency exits, California (school) districts might wait many years to buy buses — such as padding back rest iron bars that have damaged the

teeth of many children on sudden stops."

The flippant, if not criminal, ignoring of ordinary safety precautions by California authorities is illustrated in a number of the events surrounding the ill-fated accident near Blythe in the early morning hours of Jan. 15. Within minutes after the mishap, almost every

one of the persons seated on the left side of the bus drowned in less than four feet of water when the bus flipped over into a salt water ditch alongside the road. The only emergency door on the death-trap bus was on the left side, thereby leaving only the windows for emergency exits.

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Chicano women — Dollars or liberation?

MAXWELL KING

SACRAMENTO — There's women's liberation and there's Chicana liberation — and neither does enough for the Latin American women, particularly Mexican-American women, of this country, at least in the opinion of some of them.

That's why a handful of Latin American women, most of them Mexican-American, a year ago organized the Latin American Bilingual Secretaries Association in Sacramento.

The original group now has some two dozen members, and a first membership drive is scheduled for this spring. While there is as yet no formal statewide organization, there is a group almost as large in Stockton. Others have started in Los Angeles and San Jose, with still another just being launched in Fresno. Inquiries have been received from other Latin American population centers across the country.

"It's easier today for an otherwise qualified Latin American woman to obtain an office job," Ms. Rachel Sidhu, "freelance bookkeeper," national secretary of the Mexican American Chamber of Commerce and sparkplug and president of the Sacramento

group, told the *Free Press*, "but too often it's still a case of 'Mexican American woman who sits by the door,' just tokenism."

Moreover, she feels those Mexican American women who do obtain office jobs are overworked and underpaid for the work they do.

Double Load

"Bilingual office workers are expected to act, as needed, as interpreters, but they don't usually receive any extra pay for

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