King remembered
Black leadership reunites

Jesse Jackson shouted, "Somebody!" when the crowd roared back—and the walls of Holman Methodist Church shook repeatedly as Jackson's simple declaration of human worth found eagerly receptive hearts in the April 4 memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Forget Not the Dream." Rev. Jackson, the "country preacher" from Chicago who shepherds a broad spectrum of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) into the successful Poor People's Movement (PUSH) unit, made one of his first public appearances in Los Angeles at the rally, which overflowed Holman Church with more than 800 people, most black.

Sponsored by Concerned Clergy, a resurgent black clerics group, plus Coalition for Economic Survival, NAACP, Urban League and others, the rally was the best-attended local memorial to date for Rev. Dr. King, slain in Memphis in 1968 while leading a garbage workers' strike.

Of special significance was the fact that groups building the rally—especially the black clergy—put real emphasis on pragmatic parts of Dr. King's "dream": full employment; peace and an end to racism; quality integrated education; making the politicians produce, and church-community involvement.

But since the rally also anticipated this week's opening of a West Coast headquarters in Los Angeles for PUSH, the key story behind the April 4 rally was the appearance of Rev. Jackson on the same stage with many of Dr. King's closest former staffer members—staunch SCLC supporter who opposed Jackson's assumption of a splinter group after King's murder.

After years of rivalry between PUSH and SCLC (plus its non-violent sister organizations), Jackson charged that the Nixon administration was seriously threatening many important civil rights gains of the 1960's—the two groups settled down to different action programs.

With catch-phrases like "We won our civil rights, now we need our silver rights," Jesse Jackson government came to see him as an enemy in military terms—but mobilize the masses of people against war was seen as a direct threat to the military-industrial complex.

Recalling King's conviction that SCLC was an "ethic" working class organization nationalizing people and the CIA and high government officials with plotting Dr. King's death, Jackson noted that perhaps it was African politics, as seen through the eyes of Bishop H. H. Brooks, the powerful African Methodist Episcopal cleric from Los Angeles who spoke at the rally, who would carry the fight over both the books of PUSH and SCLC.

The result is that both groups now have action programs that are basically complimentary since PUSH has launched successful campaigns to help youths in Chicago and Washington, D.C., afflicted with dope and gang problems, Jackson's aim is to keep these youths in school, where they may develop skills necessary to carry the task of self-government which Jackson sees as the historical stage blacks have reached after the civil rights movement.

All this, Jackson now talks about the need for "full employment and economic" where black and white workers are equals, not mere employees, he still lacks much of an analysis of the problems that capitalism holds, especially for minority and poor people, according to many black liberation movement activists.

But his youth program is probably very complimentary to the Concerned Clergy has launched locally for quality integrated schools. That battle is being fought out in the guise of the busboy's battle before the Los Angeles Unified School District Board today.

Concerned Clergy—which is much broader than SCLC West but contains many SCLC supporters—has actively pursued economic and social goals with the Coalition for Economic Survival, in preparing a report on the city's housing crisis, especially where it affects minority, senior citizens, and has active committees on transport problems and politics.

Originally formed six years ago, Concerned Clergy was rejuvenated in Tom Bradley's successful second campaign to unseat Mayor Sam Yorty, and in the last two years the group has made increased efforts to provide some measure of leadership to the city's black community of nearly 550,000.

In any case, the April 4 rally marked an important turning point for local politics. The possibility of a large black community united behind dynamic leaders in reaching a variety of progressive goals is of vast importance, particularly in an election year when that development in Los Angeles would likely include a strong front in black leadership for just about the same time since 1968, it's a sure bet the eyes across the nation will be trained on Los Angeles.

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Two million people of Los Angeles County's seven million are of Latin-American descent. Although most are Chicanos, or immigrants from Mexico, more Latins are streaming into the area seeking work or fleeing the military dictatorships which increasingly control Latin America.

Some of the exiles have joined local groups concerned with Latin American struggles. LAGLAS (Los Angeles Group for Latin-American Solidarity) is one of the oldest groups in the city. Founded in 1969, it is a democratic, anti-imperialist, anti-imperialist-oriented coalition of lines and community-oriented groups and individuals organized against the military dictatorships in Latin America.

Tim Harken, 41, a professor of Latin-American history at California State University at Los Angeles, and a founding member of LAGLAS, said that some anti-war activities concerned in the 1960s that once the war was over, people would forget that there's still a military dictatorship in Latin America, is at work in Latin America, as well as other parts of the world.

LAGLAS has sponsored many protests against totalitarianism and US aid to repressive regimes. It organizes concerts, most recently by Hugo and Mario, and also by Chile and Brazil, to Public Interest from Puerto Rico. It has also started a film group called LUCHA. "Chile with Poems and Guns," a documentation on US involvement in the overthrow of the Allende government, is its first film. Three others about Argentina, Peru, and the relationship between Chicanos and Latin American women, are in the making.

LAGLAS, one of the many sponsors of a conference of Latin-American women, set for April 21-23, at California State University at Fullerton and in the nearby community.

On May 22, LAGLAS is bringing Spanish exile singer-poet Juan Manuel Serrat to Los Angeles at the Wildfire-Ebell Auditorium.

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