

Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Sierra Club endorses 'greenie' Mondale

At a time when Andrei Gromyko seems to be the only person who wants to have anything to do with Walter Mondale, two of America's most zealous opponents of industrial development and population growth have endorsed Fritz's flagging presidential campaign.

The Sierra Club, 92-years-old and 340,000 members strong, joined with the newer, smaller, but no less rabidly anti-growth Friends of the Earth, to announce their endorsement at a San Francisco press conference Sept. 19. Neither group had ever endorsed a candidate before.

In announcing their decision, Sierra Club head Michele Perrault repeated the usual environmentalist litany of charges against the Reagan administration, claiming that "since 1981, Ronald Reagan has managed to subvert every agency and law designed to protect the environment.

"We need a President who'll make living in America a pleasure, not a health hazard," said Perrault, who explained that the group had broken its tradition of non-partisanship because "America's environment is at stake."

In response, Mondale solemnly vowed to "end the lawlessness that's destroying our environment" and to "take polluters to court. . . . We have no right to poison, to eat up, to chew, to pollute this wonderful country of ours," said Mondale. "We are required to save it and purify it and protect it. And that's why the Sierra Club has endorsed me, along with the Friends of the Earth, for the first time in history."

Pandas, not people

It's not surprising that Mondale should win the political support of the most

influential force in the environmentalist lobby. His record has brought tears of joy even to the most determined back-to-the-cavers.

Mondale's commitment to the ecology ethos is best demonstrated by his ardent support for *Global 2000*, the Carter-Mondale administration report which argued that the world's environment was being overtaxed by population increases. The report, prepared under the direction of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, now an adviser to the Mondale campaign, bluntly stated that 2 billion people, primarily in the developing sector, would have to be eliminated by the year 2000 so that the rights of pandas would be protected from the deprivations of human beings.

That report enjoyed the backing of the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth—who have also recently embraced the KGB's nuclear freeze.

Freezing with Fritz

Mondale was no latecomer to the Malthusian cause, however. As a senator, Mondale positioned himself as a champion of the environment, just as the ecology movement began to get off the ground in 1970.

That year, Mondale played a pivotal role in securing passage of the landmark Family Planning Services and Population Research. In a speech at the time, Mondale declared that "our hopes for peace are threatened by the twin forces of runaway population and escalating poverty" and called for "fundamental changes in our economic habits, social values and national priorities in order to solve the environmental crisis." The root of this crisis, claimed Mondale, is "a culture which seems to value quantity above quality; self-interest and expedience above the beauty and mystery of nature."

Mondale has also bitterly opposed nuclear power (he recently demanded

that California's Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor be closed), insisted that Americans severely restrict energy consumption, and fought against important infrastructure projects, like the Tennessee-Tombigbee water project, on the grounds that they might interfere with local flora and fauna.

Courting the gay vote

Garnering the Sierra Club/Friends of the Earth endorsement wasn't the only "first" Mondale chalked up this week. Fritz also became the first presidential candidate in U.S. history to appoint an official liaison to the homosexual community.

According to the Sept. 19 *Baltimore Sun*, Mondale has named Sandra Gillis, a member of his campaign staff, to carry out a "strong but quiet" effort to win the gay vote to the Mondale-Ferraro ticket. Gillis says that if this bid is successful, it could win the election for the Democrats, because gays are such a significant political force. The gay voting bloc "ranks right up there with blacks and labor," says Gillis. "It's probably larger than 17 million."

Homosexual groups "are very well organized and very astute politically," says Gillis. But homosexuals haven't normally voted as a bloc. "That's why we're involved in education and outreach," Gillis explains. "We are in the process of talking to every gay activist in the country."

Mondale's courtship of the gay vote dates back to no later than fall 1982, when he keynoted the first gala fundraiser sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign Fund in New York, a homosexual lobbying group. His running-mate isn't shy about her position on the issue, either. As chairman of the Democratic platform committee, Ms. Ferraro helped place a pro-homosexual "civil rights" plank into the party platform.