

# political Affairs

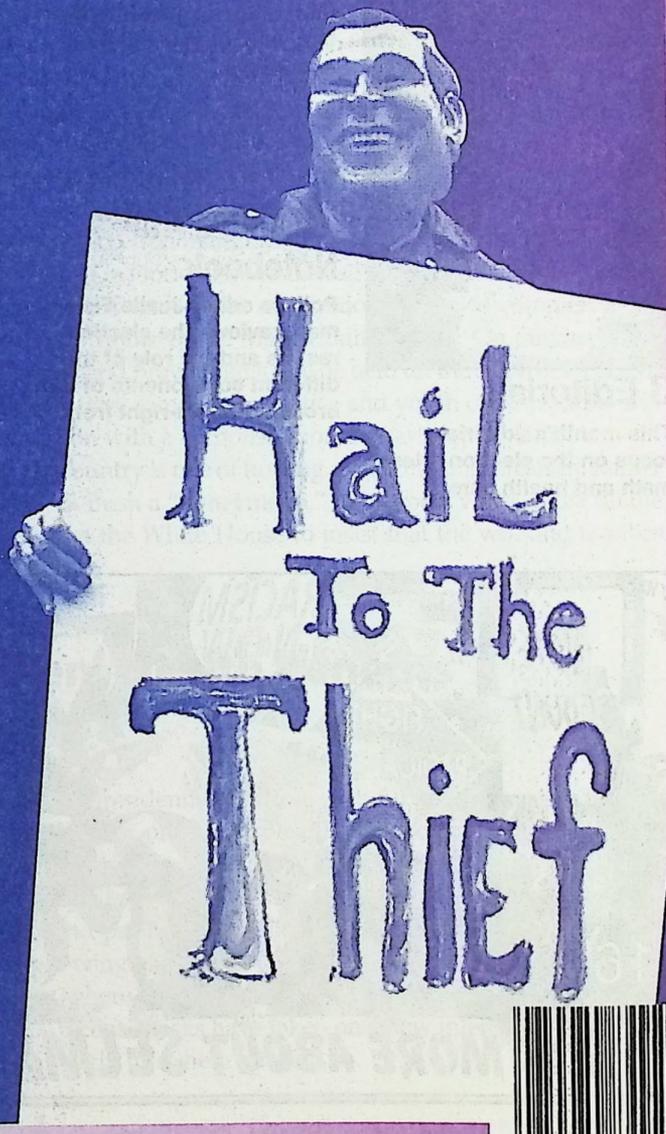
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# politicalAffairs

A Journal of Ideology, Politics, and Culture

January  
2001



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## Bushwhacked

Bush begins his presidency in the midst of great turmoil. The Florida media has begun counting the uncounted ballots, available under the Freedom of Information Act, and the results show that Gore did win Florida. Economic advisors are predicting a downturn very soon. As this edition of *Political Affairs* goes to press, labor, civil rights, women, seniors and environmental organizations are in the midst of shaping legislative demands for the new Senate and House of Representatives. As Bush announces his cabinet appointees, all in the right-wing camp, opposition is forming. In particular, welfare rights organizations are challenging Bush's choice of Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson as Health and Human Services Director. Thompson is notorious for instituting the first and most punitive destruction of the welfare safety net, used as a model for similar national legislation which has left millions of mothers and children in dire poverty.

Protests calling for election reform and investigation into Voting Rights Act violations in Florida are being organized during the week from Martin Luther King's birthday through inauguration day. Rev. Jesse Jackson, a leading figure in the struggle in Florida issued the call for nationwide "Every Vote Counts" rallies in concert with voter registration drives to commence the week of January 15 in tribute of Dr. Martin Luther King. On January 20th, "Voter Integrity" rallies and prayer vigils will be held on the steps of local federal buildings. In addition, some peace, justice and youth organizations will protest the inauguration with a demonstration in Washington, D.C.

The mood in the country is one of turning anger into organization. Rather than giving George W. Bush a "honeymoon," grass-roots voices must fill the offices of Congress and the White House to insist that the working families mandate be realized.

## Government Health Benefits Under Attack

The results of the presidential elections will further jeopardize federal, state and local government programs. Health and social welfare will be the first casualties if the right wing gets its way. We will have to double our efforts to make sure this doesn't occur. For a government to be effective there must be a highly skilled and publicly committed worker and professional workforce. While the right wing has always opposed a strong central, state or local government (except where there is profit to be made, such as in the military procurements field) recent attacks have taken on a new intensity. Health benefits provide good insight into these attacks.

## **Increases in Benefit Premiums**

Since 1998 premiums federal employees and retirees have been forced to pay to keep health insurance intact will have risen a shameful 36 percent. This is shameful because federal workers are already poorly paid. To pay these new premium increases, workers will be forced to accept even lower wages. For far too long, these workers have had to listen to the constant anti-worker, anti-union venom from members of Congress and sometimes the White House. To add more insult to further injury, next year, the rise in their health insurance premiums will be another outrageous 10.5 percent.

These increases cover all 9 million government workers and retirees. The federal Office of Personnel Management in announcing rise pointed the finger at the victims themselves citing workers "over use" of prescription drugs, greater use of medical services and people getting older.

Now, no doubt the profits that ravenous drug companies are demanding and getting is a disaster to everyone. But, the implication is that these workers are using too many drugs as well as medical services, instead of placing blame on the skyrocketing price of drugs and services. Blaming the victim is not a new concept. It should not be a crime for people to use their health service benefits. That is why health benefits are there to begin with. Also, to blame people for getting older turns the so-called American dream on its head. We should be rejoicing on the increasing longevity of people, not making it a curse and burden to families and society as a whole.

## **Remove Profits**

This crisis in premium increases that are being forced upon low and fixed income federal workers and retirees provides us the opportunity to revamp the whole federal health benefit system so that workers benefit instead of insurance carriers and right wingers in Congress. The answer is a simple one. Take all the dollars the federal government is paying for workers' health care coverage and directly buy physician and hospital services for federal employees. That's right, fully self-insure the system. Dump the insurance carriers and their HMOs. Millions will be saved by eliminating profits and advertising dollars. The whole philosophy that put that federal system in crisis must be revisited and failures must be recognized.

A few years ago the system was facing a similar cri-

sis. Then Congress decided that too much money was being spent for federal workers and retirees health services. The decision then was to privatize the system by turning health benefits over to the insurance carriers to fix the problem. Give all workers and retirees choices of plans and "the market" would do the rest. Well, we see what that disastrous decision brought us. "Market-Driven Managed Care" means disaster.

This madness must end. The failure of the market system to solve the health care crisis is being recognized by those who are the immediate victims, workers themselves. And, even those who pay for it, the employers, know that the enemy is the insurance and drug companies. But, we know that the conspiracy among the corporations will not get rid of the enemy, the insurance carriers and drug companies. Our elected government must take the lead and cut off the insurance carriers right now. Set up a new Office of Federal Workers and Retiree Benefits. That office will receive all of the money that the federal government spends on health benefits. Then that federal office can negotiate with providers of health care across the country. Top preference would be to revamp and refinance Veterans and other regional and city public hospitals across the country to begin to take care of federal employees, their families and other retirees. The United States public health service has a great program to train physicians by paying their tuition and in return, these new doctors work where they are needed. This program needs a significant increase in financial support. Under terms of free tuition agreements, these new physicians will work, on a salaried basis, for VA hospitals and similar public hospitals. This is efficient use of the trillion dollars of health care money now being squandered to insurance carriers and others in the medical industrial complex. A seamless health system is the way to go.

Under this system, there will be large savings and workers can actually put the savings into their wage rates. Retirees can also benefit.

This new federal system will be the fuel to fire a campaign for a national health program. For example, the 44 million people who are still uninsured could be folded into this public health service program. This would reverse the disastrous policies of the past decade that have been using federal employees as experiments in a failed system of private, for-profit managed care. By the way, with 9 million enrollees, the federal government can easily dictate to drug companies prices for

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**T**he dramatic struggle for democracy and the future direction of the country were at the top of the agenda of the last meeting of the CPUSA national committee. Importantly, the meeting also initiated preparations for the Party's 28th national convention set for July 6 to 8th in Milwaukee Wisconsin. In the reports to the meeting Jarvis Tyner, executive vice chairman and national chairman Sam Webb, respectively, presented reports on both topics. Special reports were also made on the California electoral struggle by vice-chair Evelina Alarcon and N.C. Secretary Juan Lopez, the New York election and Working Families Party by John Bachtell, Changing America by vice-chair Judith LeBlanc, Labor and the Elections by Wally Kaufman, Party organization by Organization Secretary Elena Mora, Cuba Solidarity by Rick Nagin, and *Political Affairs*, by Joe Sims.

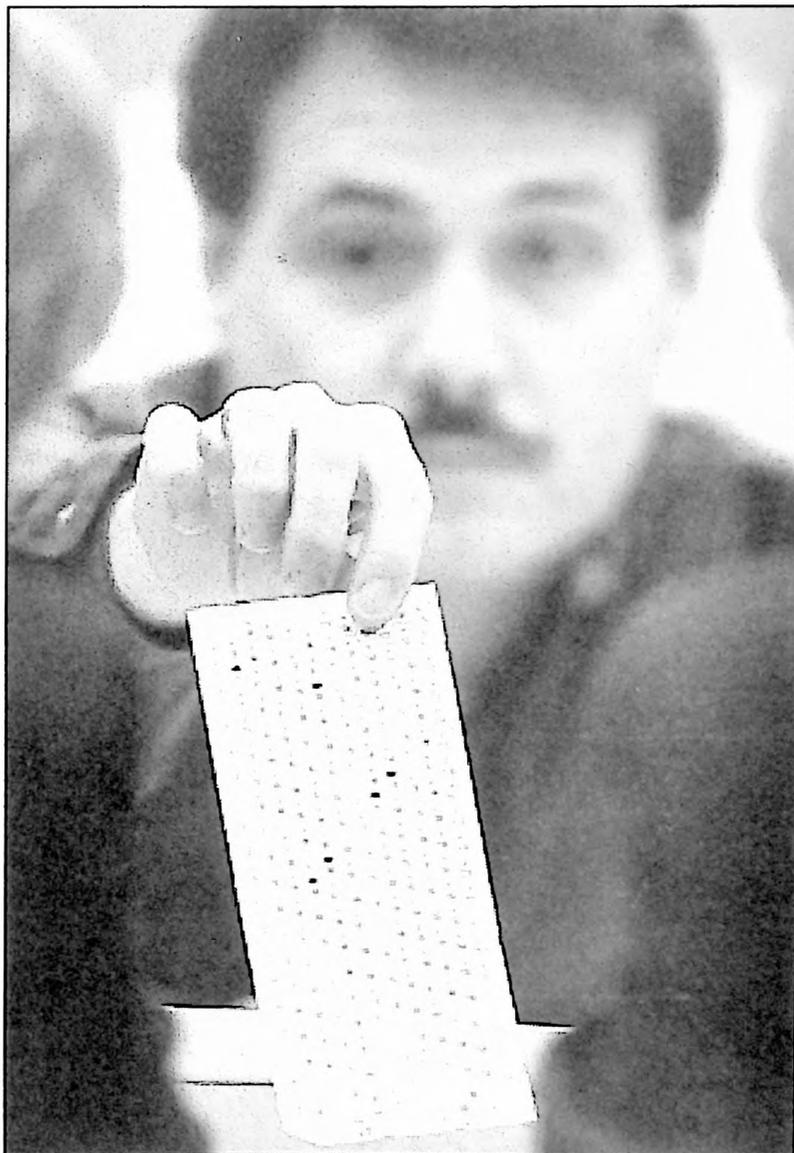
The meeting began with a tribute to the life of the recently deceased, party senior chairman Gus Hall by John Bachtell, district organizer of New York and National Committee secretary. The tribute was followed by a moment of silence. (*PA* will devote an upcoming issue to the memory of Gus Hall).

The meeting also featured a special presentation from the legendary Gladys Marin, a heroine of the Chilean anti-fascist movement, general secretary of the Communist Party of Chile who was in the U.S. in connection with ongoing legal suites growing out of the Pinochet dictatorship.

Tyner, 60, a former vice-presidential aspirant, and head of the Communist Party's political action department, presented a report on presidential and Congressional elections. Highlighting the tremendous stakes in the contest, Tyner underscored the basic correctness of the Party's defeat-the-greater-evil policy, stressing it was in accordance with the thinking and actions of millions of Americans.

Labor and the movements of the African American and Latino peoples and their organizations played an unprecedented role according to the report. In several swing states, like Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, the working-class vote made the difference said Tyner. In these states, and

## CP National Committee Access Elections, Sets Convention



AP photo

Broward County canvassing board member Judge Robert W. Lee shows a disputed ballot to Republican and Democratic party observers as the board counted ballots Saturday, Nov. 25, 2000 at the Broward County Courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

generally all over the country, the trade union vote increased substantially over the previous election, the percentage turning out on election day far higher than before. In this regard he said,

Labor is only 12 percent of the electorate nationally, yet is this election labor's vote came to 26 percent of all who voted. In Michigan 43 percent of all votes cast for Gore and Leiberman were from labor. In New York it was 39 percent of their vote... Overall union families voted 67 percent for Gore-Leiberman.

Likewise Tyner argued as a result of the efforts of the NAACP, LACLA, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and others, the African American and Latino vote was high.

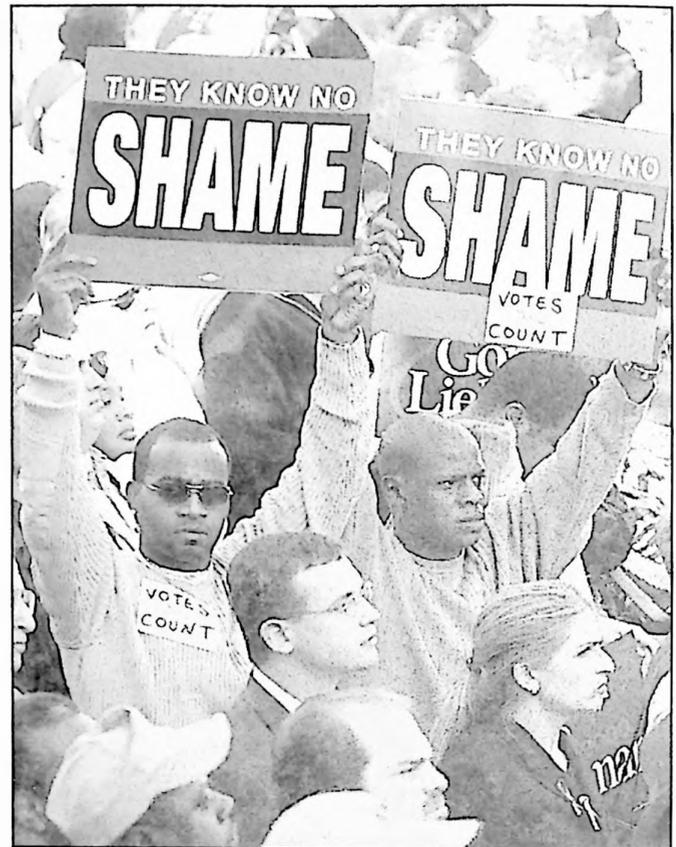
In alliance with labor and other progressive forces the African American vote which was ten percent of all voters was decisive. In many races Black voters made the difference. They voted 90 percent against Bush. African American women who constituted 6 percent of all voters, gave Gore 94 percent of their ballots... While four percent of the vote nationally Latinos were 14 percent in California and nationally voted 67 percent against Bush.

Pointing to successes in the Senate, the House of Representatives and in New York and California, Tyner argued the people won a substantial electoral victory. Despite uncertainty in Florida, the elections demonstrated that Gore won the popular vote and the Electoral College, Tyner contended.

"Above all else, what is so wonderful is that our multi-racial working class organized and exercised its democratic will and might and brought about a defeat in the popular vote for the most reactionary sections of the ruling class," he said.

Most importantly, he suggested the results demonstrate an important historic development: the emergence of a center-left electoral majority. Similarly, in this regard, the defeat of voucher referendums in California and

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Sign carrying demonstrators attend a rally in support of Vice President Al Gore at the Capitol in Tallahassee, Fla., Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2000.

Michigan was further evidence of new electoral trends. The 2.6 million votes for Nader was another important development in this regard.

The closeness of the contest in the executive vice-chairman's estimation pointed to the danger inherent in the Nader campaign. Clearly the Nader vote in Florida lost the state to the democratic forces. Because of Nader's role, the struggle for political independence was a loser in the elections. On the other hand, the report went on to suggest that a substantial portion of the Nader support realizing the closeness of the election cast their votes for the Democrats and against the ultra-right. In the post-election period Tyner argued, it was important to build relations with the forces that supported Nader, particularly on the issues of electoral reform.

Tyner's report focused squarely on the struggle for democracy and the attempt by the Republican Party to steal the vote in Florida.

"We say to George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, who claim to be restoring our nation's morality – the American people are not going to stand for this: Vote fraud is not a family value."

He continued: "A new movement has been born to defend the democratic right to vote. All across the country and in Florida in the first place there are powerful

expressions of the democratic will of the people."

The election posed important strategic and tactical challenges in relationship to defeating the greater evil and independent political action. In this connection, Tyner stressed the need for great objectivity. In both the short and long term it is important to avoid the politics of the personal he argued. "The notion that politics should be based on personal subjective frustrations," the idea that, "I'm tired of voting for the lesser-of-two evils."

This was a problem in the left. "Sections of the middle-class left refused to adopt the working-class agenda. They weren't fighting for the foot perhaps because they weren't fighting for the stomach" Tyner charged.

In spite of this, the Party leader maintained importantly, that "most of Nader's voters are our allies. They are part of the post-election coalition that should be larger and broader than the anti-Bush coalition was. The 'fair ballot' movement is uniting a broad spectrum of people than were united during the pre-election phase."

According to Tyner, this relates directly to the ongoing struggle for socialism and the party's long-term goals.

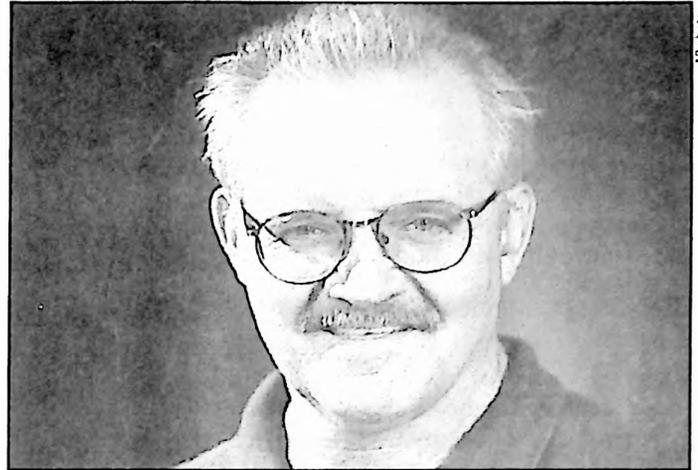
Our Party believes in and is fighting for the building of a broader and stronger third-party movement. We did not participate in this great electoral struggle because of any illusions. In the post-election period we are working for the united struggle to continue for peace, equality and economic justice. Our higher calling in this election was the defense of democracy, without which real independence and socialism are not possible ... Our view is that political independence will not follow one path or leader like Nader. The development of an independent movement that can challenge the existing two parties is moving along many tracks. The Greens are part of it. But they will not be the main track.

Considering the possibility of a Bush presidency, Tyner proposed holding him to his word. "He ran as a moderate, so moderation should be his mandate." If elected, "His administration will be under a big cloud of illegitimacy." It will be difficult he said, "But Bush and Cheney will be on the defensive. We will have to fight hard." Despite the mask of moderation, there should be no mistaking the right-wing character of the administration, Tyner concluded.

#### **Communist convention**

CPUSA chairman Sam Webb addressed the meeting regarding the Communist Party's upcoming convention. Like Tyner Webb also directed his opening remarks to the political crisis emerging around the struggle for the presidency.

"What is developing in Florida should give pause to those who doubted the extreme-right danger connected



Above: CPUSA Chairman  
Sam Webb



Right: Executive Vice  
Chairman, Jarvis Tyner

A new movement  
has been born to defend  
the democratic right to vote.  
All across the country  
and in Florida in the first place  
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to the Bush presidency." He continued,

This is a crisis of serious proportions. Bush and his crowd are trying to achieve by anti-democratic – one could convincingly argue, fascist, methods – what they could not achieve by fair and democratic means.

Mass struggle, Webb argued was on the order of the day to defend democracy and rebuff Bush's attempt to steal the election. "Whatever the post election landscape," he said,

large people's majorities on issues is imperative. Only popular majorities will be able to deter the right and compel the enactment of new progressive legislative measures in Congress on issues that drove the election campaign.

Focusing on the convention, Webb painted a picture of a lively, exciting and probing event. "Our convention should reverberate with the spirit of marches, rallies, strikes, demonstrations and picketlines in the post-election period," he said. "Delegates should palpably feel the politi-

**Our concepts are not set in stone. They have to be fitted to new conditions without sacrificing their essence. They have to be altered without changing their basic content.**



Above: Chilean CP General Secretary, Gladys Marin talks with Jose Cruz, editor of Nuestro Mundo. Below: Bush.



cal and economic whirlwinds that are sweeping our nation."

Webb stressed the importance of the pre-convention period in helping shape the upcoming national party meeting. The status of the economy, monopolization, imperialism, globalization and the impact of the new technology should all be considered. "We should also examine the struggle for political independence in light of the 2000 elections," he argued. New features of the fight against racism and the national question, women's rights, immigrant struggles and the changing face and profile of the labor movement should also be addressed in the discussions.

The CPUSA chairman suggested the context for the convention was a new era of struggle. "I would argue that a sea change has occurred in the

depth, scope and level of the class and people's upsurge. It is arguably a new era of struggle."

When we met in Cleveland four years ago I don't think we would foresee that the newly emerging labor-led people's movement would be occupying center stage in our nation's political life to the degree that it is now.

The "Battle in Seattle" against the IMF and the WTO Webb argued was a turning point and a harbinger of new things to come.

If the Battle of Seattle was a dress rehearsal announcing a new social force had arrived on the political stage ... then the fierce and broadly-based struggles surrounding the 2000 elections drive home the fact this coalition is here to stay and is moving to higher ground.

The report continued:

In the center of this extraordinary development is the labor movement. In just a few short years labor has



The Rev. Al Sharpton, left, the Rev. Walter Fauntroy, join protesters against Republican presidential candidate Texas Gov. George W. Bush at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, Friday, Dec., 1, 2000.

shed much of the debilitating outlook that greatly weakened it during the Cold War era. The thinking of our nation's working people has changed radically. The changes are not quantitative but qualitative.

In addition, note was taken of the new role of movements of the racially and nationally oppressed:



Traditional mass organizations like the NAACP and La Raza are assuming a new posture of struggle. At the same time, new organiza-

tional forms, not always permanent in character, are emerging and bringing a new impulse and level of organization to broad mass struggles. Racially oppressed workers are more and more a catalyst of struggle in their own communities and in the labor movement. Now found in

leadership positions, minority workers are instrumental in organizing coalitions of labor with the African American, Mexican American and other racially oppressed peoples.

Webb argued that all of this points to a larger pattern, a more complex social reality.

We have to take a fresh look at our level of involvement as well as our policies, tactics, structure and culture to see if they correspond to this new reality. No one is challenging the revolutionary role of the working class, or the strategic importance of the alliance of labor and the racially oppressed or the predatory and parasitic danger of imperialism or the necessity of socialism. But even these concepts have to undergo some modification in a changing world.

Enlarging on this concept the party chairman advanced that

Our concepts are not set in stone. They have to be fitted to new condi-

tions without sacrificing their essence. They have to be altered without changing their basic content. Generally, ... our concepts have to be more elastic and adaptive and especially now when political and economic life is so fluid.

During the pre-convention period Webb urged patience, openness and listening to the views of others. Sweeping characterizations of other's points of view should be avoided. "Our internal culture should be more open and transparent."

The convention report also placed a number of goals before the Party while preparing for the convention: that the members of the national board and national committee visit 75 clubs to hold discussions, that a series of recruitment meetings be organized, that the Party be "wired" from top to bottom with new computer technology, and to strengthen party organization.

Gladys Marin presented a stirring address to the meeting, highlighting the current struggles of the workers and people of Chile. She predicted that former dictator Pinochet would be brought to justice for his crime. She also called for continuing solidarity with the Chilean people.

In other related struggles, the meeting took note of the importance of the Chavez holiday struggle in California and adopted two resolutions on the struggle for democracy and the elections and solidarity with Chile. ■



## Campaign Notebook

Joelle Fishman

**T**he complexities of the 2000 elections reflect the sharpening class struggle under U.S. capitalism today. This election cycle has given rise to an emergency fightback for basic democratic rights and one-person-one-vote. Far-right demagoguery and anti-democratic intimidation, harassment and court rulings were used to install the president in disregard of the majority popular vote in the nation, and on the backs of disenfranchised Florida voters, largely poor, African American, Haitian, Puerto Rican and Jewish senior citizens.

In the midst of, and in reaction to, the drive of the far-right corporate interests to seize control of all branches of federal government, a new and inspiring coalition and movement has blossomed.

Labor and allies in the civil rights, women, and environmental movements joined together in massive

*Joelle Fishman is a secretary of the CP and is the politics editor of PA.*

and often victorious efforts to block far-right Republicans and elect pro-working family candidates in Congressional and state contests. This new level of multi-racial working-class unity in action across the country is a most significant development – in its hands lies the hope for the future.

The suppression of the voice of the voters in Florida gave rise to a pro-democracy and pro-civil rights explosion around the slogan "This is America, Count Every Vote" that was heard around the world. Even after the U.S. Supreme Court shut down the process with its tainted five-to-four decision, with the scales of injustice tipped by two with direct connections to the Bush campaign, Electoral College sessions in Michigan and other states passed resolutions of protest calling for changes in the voting process to guarantee that the will of the majority prevails.

The right-wing presidential coup places greater responsibility on the labor and people's movements to stand united and firm on issues of voting rights, labor and economic rights, civil rights and environmental rights. The evenly divided U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives with only a slim Republican majority must be blocked from carrying out the disastrous program of George W. Bush.

Beneath the thin facade of bi-partisanship, Bush and associates will be pushing hard for a far-right wing agenda. Beware of sugar coated poison pills. Watch out for dismantling public education, affirmative action and all public services. Be on guard against more tax breaks for the rich, an all-out assault on the labor movement and the right to organize, an attack on democracy including stacking all federal agencies and courts with right-wing ideologues. Be on the look out for a big increase in the military budget and weapons in space, and an intensified attack on the environment.

Those of us who had the opportunity to participate in the democracy struggle in Florida, witnessed firsthand the thuggery and raw bigotry of the Bushites as they sought to dominate the media and disrupt street protests of ordinary voters and the official work of canvassing boards alike. It is not something easy, or advisable, to forget. Any notion that all bourgeois politicians are the same; any notion that it does not make a difference who appoints the judges to the U.S. Supreme Court and the federal court system, any notion that there was nothing extraordinary about this election challenge does not stand up to the experience in Florida.

It is incumbent on all democratic minded people of good will to press the Justice Department to move with speed on lawsuits filed with the help of Rev. Jesse Jackson and the NAACP charging violations of the Voting Rights Act in Florida. Today's struggle takes place a full 35 years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, a major victory of the sit-downs and giant marches, with



Reporters look at a Broward County undervoted ballot during a manual recount at the Broward County elections dept. warehouse in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

many lives lost.

The message is simple. People are saying "We will not go back! Bipartisanship will not fulfill the will of the people." Rather, in this election a firm stance or mandate can be based on the fact that the majority voted for raising the minimum wage, the right to join a union, equal quality public education, public health care and the needs of working families.

This election showed how racism and anti-democratic methods are used to hold back advances for all working-class people. This election also showed that where racism was rejected, big advances were won. A prime example is the overwhelming defeat in Michigan and California of ballot initiatives in support of school vouchers. Another example is the 102,094 vote on the Working Families Party line in New York, more than double the last election. Important pro-labor victories were won in the Senate and House of Representatives including the defeat of Rogan in California and McCullum in Florida, right-wing Republican leaders of the impeachment against Clinton. Other positive results include the election to the Senate of six labor-endorsed candi-

dates including Hillary Clinton in New York and the election of a trade union activist, Mike Honda to the House of Representatives from California.

Despite the fact that the hoped-for goal of ending right-wing Republican control of the Congress was not yet achieved in this election, the goal came close to being realized, and is certainly in the picture for 2002.

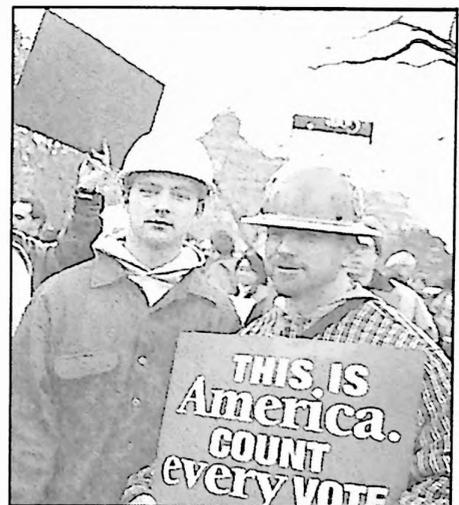
A better understanding of the significant gains made can be gathered from a closer look at the grass roots organizing results of labor and allies. Their story tells us that progressive forces are on a forward march. Their story inspires us to refuse to be divided, to fight hard for a pro-working class agenda at all levels of government. Their story projects the potential and shows the necessity for progressive coalitions to expand their reach, build independent machinery, and elect many labor and people's candidates in the immediate future.

#### Labor vote

The unions of the AFL-CIO did a spectacular job of workplace edu-

cation, voter registration, and get-out-the-vote on the job and at the homes of union members. As a result, union households made up a record high 26 percent of all voters, up from 23 percent in the last election. In Michigan, 43 percent of all votes cast for Gore and Lieberman were from labor. In New York it was 39 percent of the vote. Over 30 percent of all voters in Ohio, Illinois, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Missouri were from labor. The labor movement added 2.3 million new voters from union households to the rolls. There were 1,000 Labor 2000 coordinators, up from 400 in the last election. There were eight million calls to union households from phone banks, up from 5.5 in the last election. Over 93 percent of union members heard from their unions, 82 percent remembered receiving union publications on the elections, and 21 percent remembered being contacted on the job by means of 14 million leaflets, 12 million mailings, 755 different work-site flyers at work-site distributions. The AFL-CIO reports that:

Union members supported the Gore-Lieberman ticket by a margin of 63 percent to 32 percent.



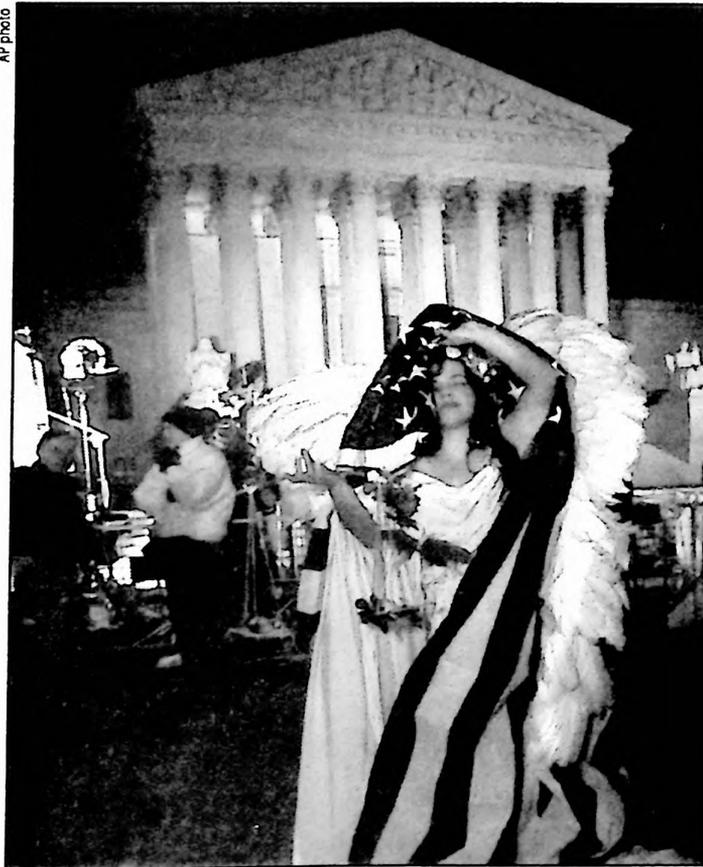
Workers demonstrate at Supreme Court.

The results capped the most massive mobilization of working family voters ever ... Working families mobilized the biggest "People-Powered" election campaign to date. An estimated 100,000 union members volunteered their time at work sites, phone banks and in precinct walks to support candidates who will fight for a Working Families Agenda.

John Sweeney, president of the 13 million member AFL-CIO hailed the mobilization for this election in terms of its lasting impact in the struggle for a better future for working families:

We've reunited our ranks and re-sparked the soul of our movement. We're building a solidarity and culture of mobilization that will last ... During this campaign, union members from all walks of life: janitors and engineers, doctors and nurses, telecommunications workers and teachers, steelworkers and construction workers hundreds of thousands joined together as never before... The fullness of that impact is up to us ... through sustained grassroots mobilization and organizing, and by continuing to bring people together to rebuild their communities and improve their lives.

Holly Johnson of Mahwah, N.J., poses in front of the U.S. Supreme Court Monday, Dec. 11th.



AP photo

A total of 900 union members ran for local, state and federal office, up from 600 in the last election. There are now a total of 2,000 union activists either holding or having run for office at the state and local level. In the primaries, thirteen union activists ran for Congress. Ed O'Brien, a steelworker, got 47 percent of the vote in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Craig Goodnight, a steelworker, got 40 percent of the vote in a largely Republican district in Indiana. Larry Nelson, a steelworker, got 37 percent of the vote in Arizona. Nancy Keenan, a teacher union member, received 47 percent of the vote for Congress in Montana. Gerrie Schipske, a member of SEIU, came within 1200 votes of election in Long Beach, California. Reporting to his members, USWA president George Becker said:

Our gains should not be taken lightly. These efforts, along with your strong support, have opened the door for the future. We have proven that Steelworkers and other members of labor can run competitive campaigns for Congress... I fully expect that in future elections we will continue to see more Steelworkers and other members of labor continue to put forth legitimate challenges in Congressional races, not to mention the thousands that will vie for elected positions in state and local races. This election was just the beginning!

### Black Vote

African American voters turned out in record numbers in this election, in Florida and across the country, voting 90 percent for Al Gore. Florida voters in the Black community were spurred on by the experience of living under Governor Jeb Bush, and his efforts, thwarted by mass action, to dismantle affirmative action. Many organizations played a part in the voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts.

In a statement of congratulations, NAACP president Kweisi Mfume said the organization had conducted the most massive voter effort in its 91-year history:

The NAACP spent a tremendous amount of time, money and energy in a well-organized grassroots effort to increase the number of African Americans who cast their votes at the polls on Election Day ... Let the record show that this unprecedented voter empowerment initiative signals that African American voters are rightfully claiming their place as power brokers and stakeholders in the nation's electoral process.

The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP), encompassing 80 organizations, coordinated

the Unity 2000 Voter Mobilization Campaign in 29 states and 83 cities through its Operation Big Vote and Black Youth Vote programs including Operation Big Vote, the NAACP, Black Leadership Forum, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Black Youth Vote, National Urban League and many others. The results were historic. According to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies:

In several states, including Florida, Missouri, New York, Georgia, Mississippi, Illinois, North Carolina, Michigan, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas, the Black vote increased significantly over 1996. For example, Florida was one of the key states that saw a substantial increase in Black voter participation. In 1996, the Black share of the vote, meaning the proportion of all voters who were African American, was 10 percent.

In 2000, the Black share of the vote was 16 percent, representing a 60 percent increase.

In Missouri, the Black vote increased by more than 140 percent from 5 percent in 1996 to 12 percent in 2000. New York increased by 22 percent; North Carolina from 18 to 21 percent; Tennessee from 13 to 20 percent; Mississippi from 27 to 34 percent and Texas from 10 to 13 percent.

"Because of this coalition effort we are seeing big changes take place," said Richard Womack, NCBCP chairman and director, Civil and Human rights, AFL-CIO. "This is only the beginning in terms of where we think the Black vote is going."

### Latino vote

Major organizations of the Mexican American and Latino communities organized and coordinated voter drives. The number of Latino voters increased to 5.7 million, up from 4.1 million in 1998. Nationally, Latinos voted 67 percent for Al Gore. In California, the 14 per-

cent Latino electorate helped make the defeat of Bush possible in that state. The campaign and passage of a paid state holiday honoring Caesar Chavez' birthday helped galvanize the vote. In New York, the Latino vote was an important factor in the election of Hillary Clinton. The Southern Voter Registration Education Project reports: "Preliminary estimates by the William C. Velesquez Institute (WCVI) showed Latinos cast a record number of ballots in the 2000 general election. Latinos cast 5.5 million votes in the 2000 election, an increase of 572,000 votes or 11.6 percent over the '96 elections. Latinos represented 5.2 percent of the total vote a modest increase compared to 1996. In this regard WCVI president Antonio Gonzalez said,

The 5.5 million represented a 71.4 percent rate of turnout of the estimated 7.7 million Latinos registered voters. Once again, Latinos demonstrated a clear trend of increasing participation. Despite the fact that the three states with the largest Latino electorate, California, Texas and New York were considered 'out of play' in the race for the presidency, U.S. Latino participation grew at a rapid rate compared to 1996.

In Puerto Rico, the Statehood Party was defeated, and Sila Maria Calderon, the first woman governor of Puerto Rico was elected on a program of ending U.S. military tests on the island of Vieques.

### Women's vote

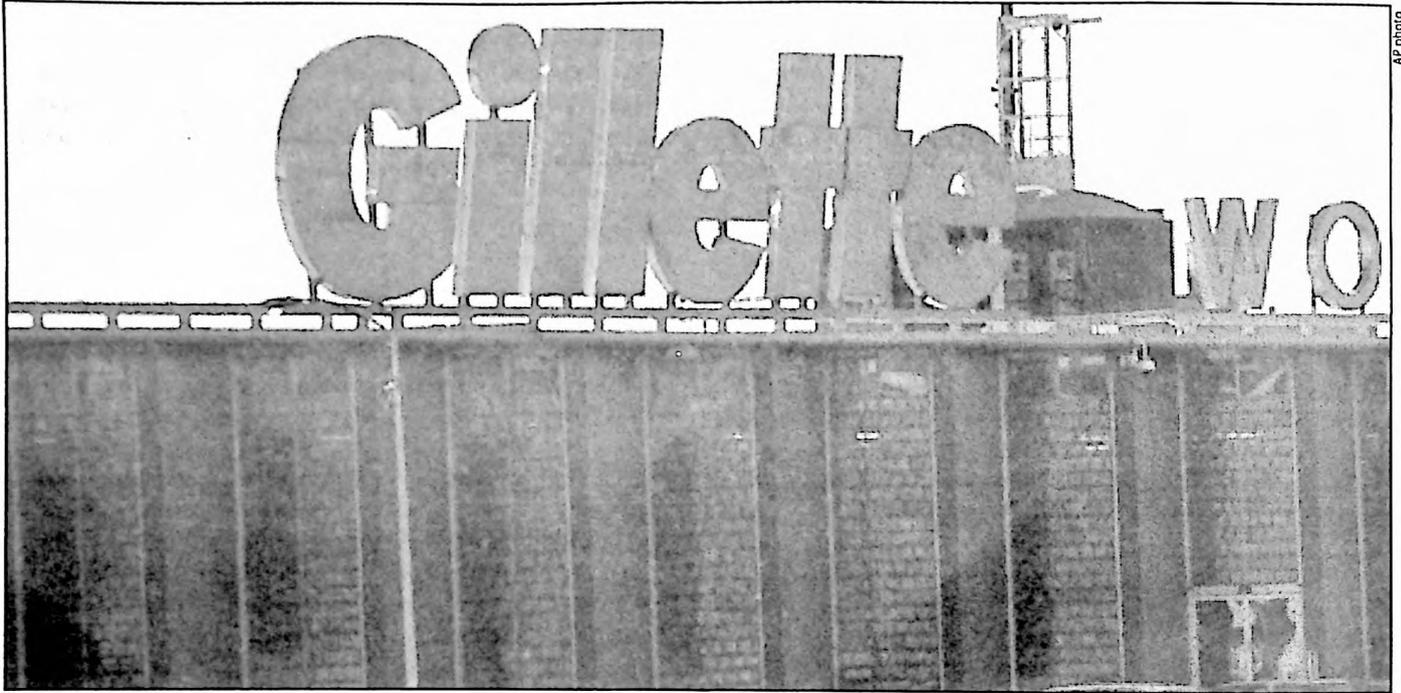
Progressive women's organizations, in particular the National Organization for Women (NOW) worked



Bonnie Mahl of New Orleans rests during a rally in Tallahassee, Dec. 13, in protest of Supreme Court decision to stop the manual recount.



The author on the battle line at the federal building in New Haven.



The Gillette Co. headquarters is seen, Monday, Dec. 18, 2000, in Boston. Gillette announced Monday, Dec. 18, 2000, that it plans to eliminate 2,700 jobs, and close eight factories and 13 distribution centers as part of a plan to boost its profit growth.

tirelessly to defeat the ultra-right in this election, focusing on the need to preserve a woman's right to choose. In a statement on November 8, NOW president Patricia Ireland declared:

Fifty-four percent of women voted for Gore, handing him the popular vote that had been widely predicted to go to Bush. If men alone had voted, Bush would have won the presidency hands-down. Women voters defeated incumbents, increased the number of women governors and senators, and brought new feminists to the House ... We have gone from three to five women out of 50 governors and nine to 13 out of 100 Senators ... A combination race-and-gender gap also made a significant impact on the outcome of numerous elections. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jon Corzine (D-NJ), Mark Dayton (D-MT) and Bill Nelson (D-FL) will be joined by Jean Carnahan (D-MO), in holding the line in the Senate.

#### **Environmental Vote**

Many environmental organizations, and in particular the Sierra Club, joined forces with labor and other allies in this election to defeat ultra-right, anti-environment candidates. In a statement issued the day after elections, Executive Director Carl Pope emphasized the success of their voter efforts in 13 Senate and 41 House

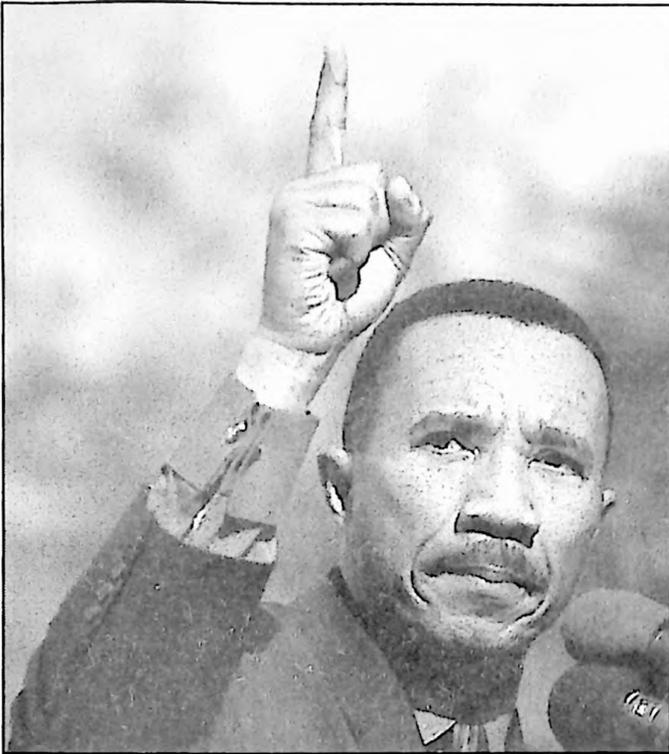
races:

If you add Al Gore and Ralph Nader's vote totals, a clear majority of people voted for policies and a vision to protect America's environment. If George W. Bush becomes our next President, he ignores this environmental support at his peril. The Sierra Club's 600,000 members and millions of Americans stand ready to work day and night to protect America's environment for our families and for our future.

#### **Communists**

The Communist Party early on adopted the fighting stance of defeating the greater evil, the far-right wing Bush team. We stood firm with working-class voters fighting for economic survival and social justice. We greeted and joined with the coalition of labor and allies as a significant advance toward political independence and in defense of democracy. While we hoped to field more candidates at the local level during this election cycle, two remained in the running through November. An 11 percent vote was received in a city council race on the East Coast, and on the West Coast, an election was won to the Berkeley Rent Board in California. Reflecting on the historic election battles and looking ahead to the new year, Sam Webb, Chairman of the Communist Party USA said:

Broad mass struggle and unity is the order of the



NAACP National President Kweisi Mfume speaks during a NAACP rally outside the Stephen Clark Government Building in Miami, Monday, Dec. 11, 2000.

day regardless of the governing posture of Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress.

Large people's majorities and unity are the only way to derail the reactionary Republican policies and set the stage for a anti-ultra right, anti-corporate, all-people's counteroffensive. The 2002 elections are crucial but should not be a substitute for immediate and militant struggles on tax cuts, education, Social Security, labor rights, Medicare, affirmative action, racial profiling, women's right to chose, election reform, military spending and aggression, and other issues.

This is a unique moment in our nation. We are on the cusp of historic battles that will determine the direction of our country. And great victories and political breakthroughs are now within reach.

### Conclusion

During and after the elections, Ralph Nader, standing apart from the historic effort of labor and allies to defeat the far-right wing danger, insisted that the differences between Bush and Gore were so small, if any, that voters should cast their ballots for the Green Party. Despite the disastrous effects of that policy, the post-election struggles on issues of economic, social and environmental justice and peace, show the necessity to come together. Surely at this time the danger of the Bush

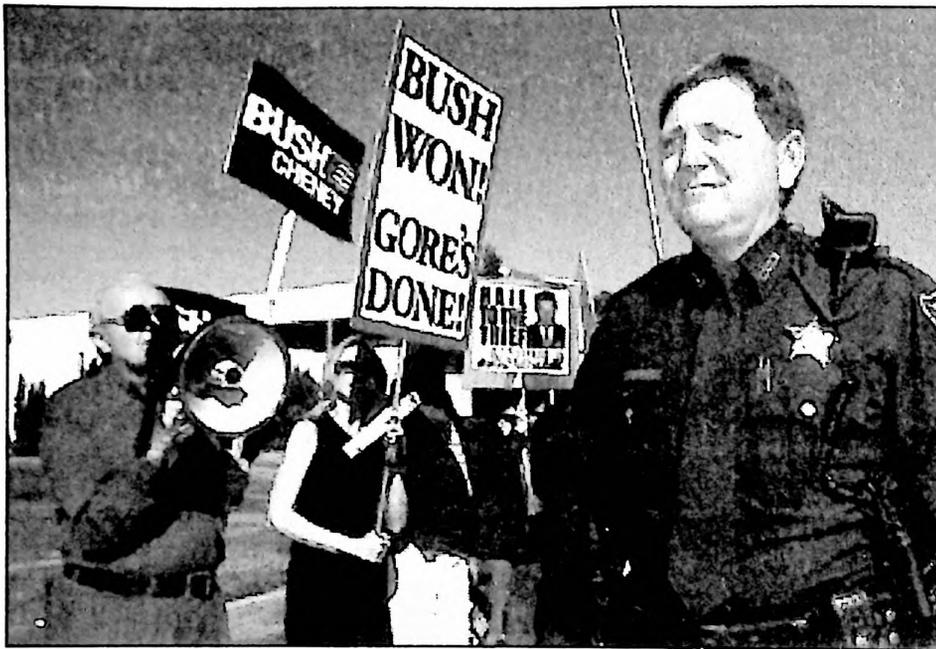
cabal is clear. Their use of force to stop the vote count in Miami-Dade County, their manipulation of the courts to seize the presidency, their military and big business appointments to the cabinet, Trent Lott's proclamations that the Republicans will rule Congress as if they had a mandate, all spell a clear and present danger.

For all of us who helped to produce the historic turnouts this year in the name of people's politics independent of corporate control, the fight has just begun. From the vote fraud in Florida arise demands for enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, an end to the Electoral College, same day voter registration, updated voting mechanisms, and other means of opening the electoral process such as proportional representation and fusion tickets. "Millions will never accept Bush as a legitimate president. He was not elected, he was rejected by the majority of voters," said Jarvis Tyner, chair of the Electoral Commission and Executive Vice Chairman of the Communist Party. He projects a "Post-Election Program of Struggle" for the mandate, based on the issues which energized the majority to vote for Gore:

- Raise the minimum wage;
- Create a prescription drug program;
- Stop any privatization of Social Security;
- Pass legislation on hate crimes;
- Pass legislation to stop racial profiling;
- Rethink Star Wars;
- Give working families a tax break;
- Better fund public schools;
- Eliminate the use of vouchers;
- Pass labor law reform;
- Appoint a Supreme Court that will not repeal Roe vs. Wade;
- A moratorium on the death penalty;
- A big cut in the military budget through nuclear disarmament;
- Ending the embargo against Socialist Cuba;
- No new Vietnam in Colombia, South America!

As this edition of *Political Affairs* goes to press, labor, civil rights, women and environment organizations are in the midst of shaping the legislative demands for the new Senate and House of Representatives.

Far from being a time of discouragement or stepping aside, what more important time to reject divisiveness turn anger into organization and fill the new Congress with the demands from the grass roots that the working families mandate must be realized. ■



Deputy Sgt. Dale Wagner walks along a line of supporters of Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, outside the Seminole County Courthouse Monday, Nov. 27th.



Bush campaign attorney Barry Richard, left.

# Count every vote

Tim Wheeler

**"E**very vote counts! Count every vote!" That demand resounded across the state of Florida for the five extraordinary weeks in which the outcome of the Nov. 7 presidential election was deadlocked. The stage was set for the "battle for Florida" when Democrats Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman concluded early that contrary to conventional wisdom, Florida was not "Bush country." If they campaigned hard they could carry the "Sunshine State" and win its crucial 25 electoral votes.

It was the signal for a strong, grassroots effort to block Bush in a state he had considered safe. The governor of Florida, brother Jeb, is tightly connected with the most powerful reactionary circles of the state including the citrus and sugar

agribusiness corporations. He is a darling of the ultra-right anti-Castro Cuban emigres in Miami. Republican domination had been growing with a nearly two-to-one majority in the Florida legislature.

But this ignored the other side of Florida: its powerful senior citizen movement led by councils of union retirees such as the 25,000 strong United Auto Worker retiree council. The Florida Council of Senior Citizens is a strong engine of progressive movement. The Florida AFL-CIO under the energetic leadership of President Marilyn Lenard and Secretary-Treasurer Tony Hill, has become a positive force for change throughout the state.

African Americans were furious with Gov. Jeb Bush for pushing through his "One Florida" scam that terminated affirmative action in the university system as well as in public employment and minority con-

tracting. Last March, in a harbinger of things to come, nearly 50,000 protesters converged on the state capital, Tallahassee, to denounce these actions.

The NAACP and other African American groups launched a statewide voter registration and get-out-the-vote drive that resulted in a record-smashing 900,000 Black Floridians voting Nov. 7, more than 92 percent for Gore-Lieberman.

## Other factors that favored Gore-Lieberman

Contrary to its image, Miami has a substantial base for progressive movement that includes thousands of African Americans, Haitians, Puerto Ricans and a sizeable fraction of Cuban Americans. Miami-Dade is actually a Democratic stronghold. Another factor is the sizeable Jewish vote in many parts of Florida.

Tim Wheeler is editor of the Peoples Weekly World.

There was also a sharp battle for an open U.S. Senate seat that pitted Florida insurance commissioner Bill Nelson, a Democrat, against the extremist Republican Bill McCollum, one of the main instigators of the Clinton impeachment. McCollum went down to defeat.

As election day drew near, it was obvious that an upset was in the making in Florida. And when the state's six million votes were counted, the margin was so close that exit polls first showed Gore the winner.

The vote margin between Gore and Bush was so razor thin, that it triggered an automatic recount. But in counties that used paper ballots, mostly Democratic strongholds, a

raging controversy erupted with Gore and his backers demanding a manual recount because of 65,000 or more "under-vote" ballots in which voters had failed to fully punch out the so-called "chad."

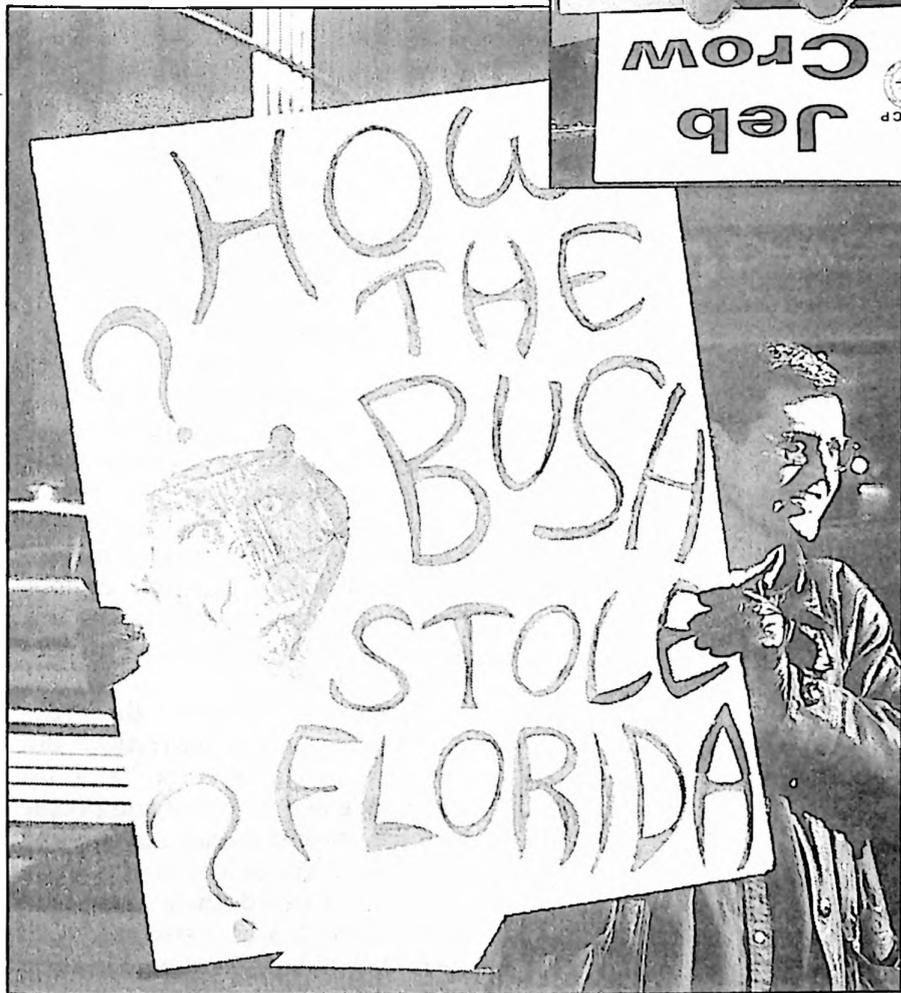
The battle lines quickly formed over this issue. Progressive forces stood squarely on the demand that

the fundamental, democratic right of the people to vote and have their votes counted was at stake. On the other side stood the Bush-Cheney campaign, represented by Big Oil attorney, James Baker, who had served as Secretary of State in the administration of George W. Bush's father. Baker was backed up by a bevy of other high-priced lawyers who filed a blizzard of lawsuits with one constant refrain: "Stop the recount of votes in Florida by any means necessary."

As the days passed and the struggle both in the courts and in the streets grew hotter, the source of the Bush-Cheney panic over counting votes became ever more apparent. A partial manual re-count in Palm Beach County, Broward County and Miami-Dade County produced net gains for Gore-Lieberman. The Bush-Cheney 930 vote margin was shrinking to nothing. It was clear that if this process had been allowed to continue, Gore-Lieberman would win the popular vote in Florida just as they won the popular vote by 350,000 votes nationwide.

A powerful grassroots "Count-Every-Vote" movement sprang up across Florida spearheaded by organized labor, the movement of senior citizens, the African American people, the Haitian community, the Jewish community, the women's equality and environmental movement. This movement pulled into its ranks thousands of men and women who had never before demonstrated. Leaders of progressive organizations rushed to Florida to help in the mobilization including the Rev. Jesse Jackson of the Rainbow Coalition/Operation Push, Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women. Kweisi Mfume, executive director of the NAACP went to Miami to chair a Nov. 11 hearing in which hundreds of witnesses reported that they had been harassed and intimidated. Registered voters testified that they had

Joseph Pettigrew



Above: New Yorkers protest election. Above right: a child waits with parents at march protesting the Jeb Bush plans to overturn affirmative action in Florida.

been turned away from their polling places. Mfume called on Attorney General Janet Reno to order a full investigation of massive violations of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The AFL-CIO sent in organizers to reinforce the efforts of the Florida AFL-CIO. These teams, working out of local union halls in West Palm Beach, collected 10,000 affidavits of Palm Beach County voters who had been denied the right to cast their ballot and have it accurately counted. It served as evidence in Gore's lawsuit demanding a full hand recount in Palm Beach County.

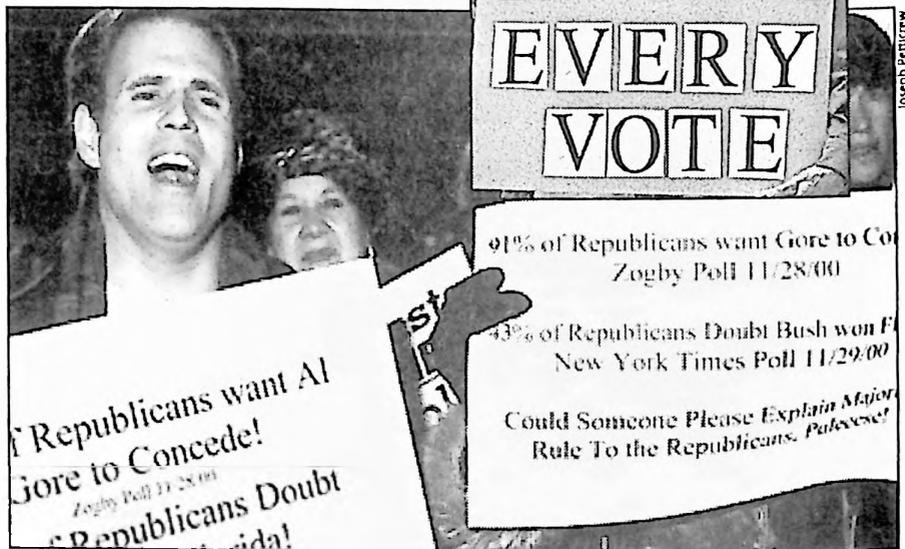
### Eyewitness to history

I was privileged to be an eyewitness to this movement, reporting for the *People's Weekly World* from both West Palm Beach and Tallahassee for three weeks during two separate trips to Florida. Joelle Fishman, chairperson of the Communist Party of Connecticut also flew in to West Palm and spent several days.

The attractive power of the movement, reminiscent of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, was so great, that after filing my deadline articles, I found myself joining in the struggle. One day, I joined a team knocking on doors and passing out leaflets urging participation in a mass march through the mostly African American town of Riviera Beach, November 18th. Several of us, including a team from the Young Communist League, also distributed hundreds of PWWs at the daily mass demonstrations in West Palm. So intense was the level of activity and the sense that democracy was in peril, that when we showed up at one demonstration, it ended with an appeal that we race across town to another demonstration. Always, we outnumbered the handful of Bush-Cheney protesters by a ratio of ten to one at the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center. "Gore got more!" and "Count every vote," we

chanted, drowning out the taunts of the Bush-Cheney provocateurs.

The Rev. Tom Masters, pastor of the New Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Riviera Beach was a sparkplug of the fightback movement. He was galvanized into action by evidence of widespread violations of the Voting Rights Act in Riviera Beach and throughout Florida, including complaints from members



Above and above right, thousands protested the Supreme Court decision across the country as photos from New York and California demonstrate.

of his own congregation. Masters told me he was deeply moved by the multiracial, interfaith movement that sprang up to defend the right to vote. "This coalition is going to continue to grow no matter who wins the presidency," he said.

### Eye of the storm

Lou Kalb, former president of the Century Village Council of Senior Citizens in West Palm Beach echoed that optimism. "Who would have imagined that the struggle to keep George W. Bush out of the White House would come down to a handful of votes in Palm Beach County," Kalb said with a chuckle. "And who would have imagined that Century Village would be in the eye of the hurricane?"

Kalb, who recently turned 80, decried the news media's round-the-clock, saturation coverage of the lawsuits and counter-lawsuits as Gore and Lieberman turned to the courts to force a full count of an estimated 183,000 discarded ballots. "After a while, peoples' eyes just glaze over from all the legal maneuvers," Kalb said.

Of course, he added, the struggle on the legal front was crucial. But far more crucial was the battle for the minds and hearts of the people and the key to that was "street heat," mobilizing tens of thousands of voters who believed their votes had been stolen. It was a struggle, Kalb said, that had to be national in character.

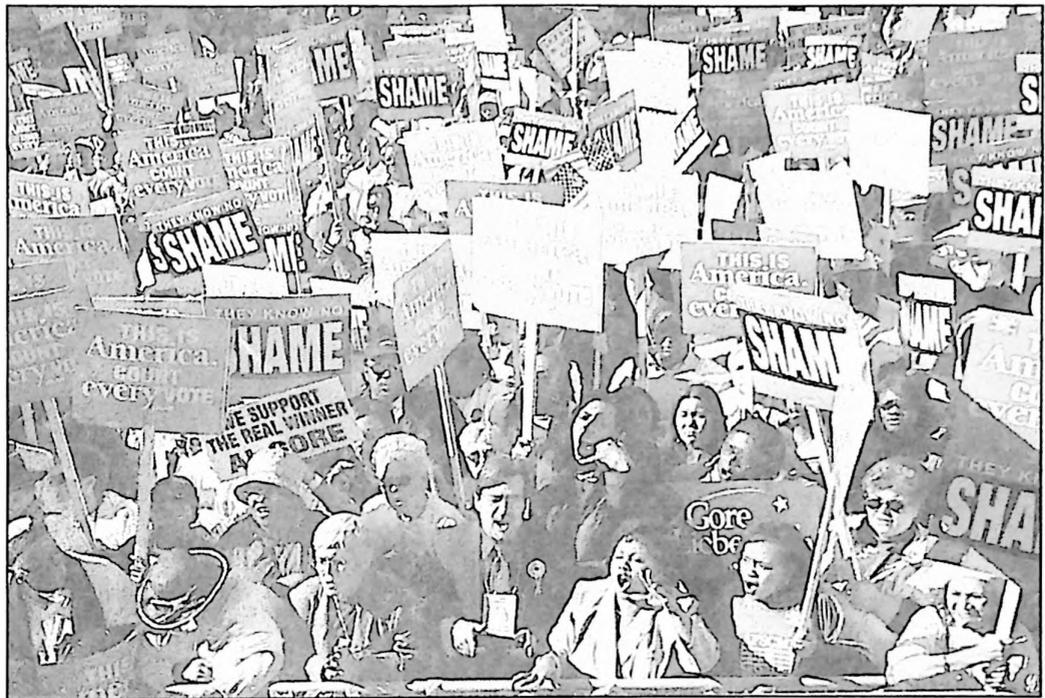
Century Village, a retirement community in West Palm Beach is home to 15,000 people, many of

them union retirees, a majority Jewish. They played a heroic role in helping form the "Count-Every-Vote" coalition. It is a gated village of modest white garden condominiums. There are well-trimmed golf courses and walking trails for fitness enthusiasts. Flocks of white ibis and snowy egrets wade in the canals between the condos. When the day is done, the graceful palm trees stand out in silhouette against the flamingo pink sunset. Surely, this is as close to heaven as one can get on earth, a warm, sundrenched place to "get away from it all," reward for a lifetime of hard work.

Instead Kalb, Sid Taylor and other Century Village activists found themselves in the frontline of the struggle against the ultra-right. And while Ponce de Leon came here searching for the "fountain of youth," it seems that Kalb, Taylor and their comrades-in-arms found the eternal spirit of youth. It came as a hard fight for justice in the streets of West Palm. Taylor literally traversed the state to attend protest rallies in Miami, West Palm and Tallahassee to protest the Bush-Cheney theft of the election. His picture holding a placard that said, "Count the vote of every vet" showed up in the *Palm Beach Post*.

"In all the years that I have been politically active in Florida, I have never seen a coalition as broad and deep as the one we built here in this election campaign," Kalb said. "Our hope is that this coalition is the lasting achievement of this struggle, that it becomes even broader and more diverse in the months ahead."

The reception given to Rev. Jesse Jackson when he came here perfectly illustrated that new coalition. A decade ago, Jackson made an anti-



Several thousand demonstrators attend a rally at the Capitol in Tallahassee, Fla.

Semitic comment that inflicted wounds that have taken years to heal. But he drew a cheering ovation from hundreds of Century Villagers when he spoke at the village clubhouse. He urged them to join in the street protests demanding that every vote be counted.

"You are right in the middle of a political storm that could define our democracy for many years to come," Jackson said. "What is at stake is not Mr. Gore or Mr. Bush but the integrity of our democracy. It is your will that must be respected."

He pointed out that in this struggle, Jewish Holocaust survivors who fought to defeat Hitler fascism were joining in struggle with the descendants of African slaves and Haitian "boat people." He added, "We share a history of suffering and struggle, boat people who are all in the same boat."

#### Demand for re-vote

It was at first a spontaneous outpouring in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and other counties by

voters enraged that their votes, and the election itself, had been stolen. In Palm Beach County, voters denounced the infamous, illegal butterfly ballot that had so confused voters that 3,400 in that heavily Jewish enclave mistakenly voted for anti-Semite Pat Buchanan. They demanded the only possible solution, a chance to vote again. Their chant was "Re-vote."

I met Jacqueline Dries of Lake Worth standing outside the Palm Beach County Governmental Center a few days after the Nov. 7 election. A manual recount of contested ballots was underway inside the building while outside, hundreds of protesters had gathered.

"This is not something we asked for," she told me. "No one organized us to come out like this. But if we stand our ground and stick together, we will get a government of by and for the people."

She said she was beside herself Nov. 7th because she had mistakenly punched her ballot for Buchanan. She took her ballot to the clerk at her polling station and asked for another ballot.

AP photo



Rev. Jesse Jackson, center right, talks to demonstrators in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, Friday, Dec. 1, 2000.

"The clerk said they had no additional ballots and I should just put it in the box. But on the back of the sample ballot, it says voters are entitled to a replacement ballot if they make a mistake on the first one. It really scares me what Bush might do if he succeeds in stealing this election," she said.

#### A whiff of fascism

As the struggle developed, it became clear that this was not an innocent "mistake" or "mismanagement" by well-meaning election officials. The Bush-Cheney campaign, representing the most extreme, reactionary, pro-corporate circles had been for many months orchestrating a deliberate, multi-faceted conspiracy to steal the election in Florida.

The menace of that conspiracy was on full display when a Republican goon squad showed up at the offices of the Miami-Dade Canvassing Board Nov. 22. They banged on the plate glass windows and kicked the door of the room where election workers had resumed a manual recount of votes. "Fraud!" they

screamed. "The fix is in!"

The all-white goon squad knocked two network television crew members to the floor and roughed up two Democratic Party observers. Within hours, the Miami-Dade canvassing board reversed its unanimous decision to conduct a full manual recount of votes.

The *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the leaders of the hooligans were staff members of House Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R-TX) whose office on Capitol Hill had become a command post for recruiting as many as 750 rowdies. Many of them were staff members of Republican lawmakers who traveled to Florida to harass and intimidate the volunteers engaged in recounting vote. The *Journal* reported that all their travel expenses including air fare, lodging at posh beachfront hotels and meals were covered by the Bush-Cheney campaign. Rep. Jerrold Nadler commented that there was more than a "whiff of fascism" in this operation.

#### Purging voter rolls

Equally sinister, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris last spring spent \$4 million in taxpayer funds to hire Database Technologies (DBT) of Boca Raton and its parent company, Atlanta-based ChoicePoint Inc. to purge Florida's voter rolls. Between 8,000 and 20,000 voters were victims of this "scrubbing" of the voter rolls, disproportionately African Americans. Thousands were erased from the voting rolls on "mistaken" information that they were "felons."

When County Election Supervisors sent out notices to voters that their names were being removed, a flood of complaints poured in. Many protested that they had never even been arrested, let alone convicted of a felony. According to Ray Leos, an investigative journalist who wrote an expose of this scam for the *PWW*, "In nearly every county, most of those who were inaccurately listed as felons were African Americans."

The Internet magazine, *Salon.com* quotes election officials in Hillsborough County, which includes Tampa, who did an in-depth survey of those removed from the voter lists. "The officials found that 54 percent of the 3,258 county voters who were mistakenly put on the list were Black even though Blacks make up only 11.6 percent of that county's voting population." Leos reveals that ChoicePoint CEO, Rick Rozar contributed \$100,000 in soft money to the Republican National Committee in 1997. Former Minnesota Congressman, Vin Weber, an ultra-right ideologue, serves as ChoicePoint's Washington lobbyist. ChoicePoint/DBT is working closely with an extremist outfit called the Voter Integrity Project (VIP) which includes a "citizen poll watching program" in which VIP agents "stand over a poll worker's shoulder and check every voter against master registration lists..."

## Vast right-wing conspiracy

VIP is linked to the most fascist-like Republicans, including former Rep. Bob Dornan (R-CA). VIP unsuccessfully attempted to help Dornan in his challenge of Rep. Loretta Sanchez' election in Orange County California by falsely accusing her of packing the ballot-boxes with votes by "illegal immigrants." Ironically, William Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court got his start in Republican politics back in the 1950s working as a goon at polling places in Phoenix, Arizona, to intimidate Black and Latino voters, ordering them to read parts of the U.S. Constitution and explain the passages.

The chair of the VIP governing board is Helen Blackwell, Virginia director of the extremist Eagle Forum. Her husband, Morton Blackwell is a member of the Council on National Policy (CNP), the secretive high command group of the ultra-right which includes in its ranks the notorious Lt. Col. Oliver North, Christian Coalition founder, Rev. Pat Robertson, and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). George W. Bush has met secretly with the CNP. Here is a "smoking gun" that proves a vast right-wing conspiracy to strip thousands of Black voters of their right to vote.

The conspiracy reached sewer level when the Bush-Cheney campaign, took its case to the ultra-right majority U.S. Supreme Court. Bush-Cheney were enraged that the Florida' Supreme Court in a split 4-3 decision sided with the people and ordered a full recount of all disputed ballots in Florida, about 65,000 ballots. Given the atmosphere, their ruling was an act of real courage. The count was proceeding smoothly in the Leon County Public Library in Tallahassee and in other jurisdictions.

Then the Supreme Court ordered the recount halted. They stalled for several days and on Dec. 12, in a ruling written by Rehnquist and signed by Justices Antonin

Scalia, Clarence Thomas, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy, remanded to the Florida Supreme Court with a stipulation that any recount must be completed by Dec. 12. In their weasel-worded ruling, the five right-wing justices claimed that Bush-Cheney were denied "equal protection" in the recount because of a lack of uniformity in the recount. They voiced not a word of concern for the "equal protection" of 183,000 disenfranchised Florida voters.

Beneath their rhetoric was the plain fact that they were opposed to counting every vote. Baker kept complaining that the votes had been "counted and counted again." In fact, at least 9,000 Miami-Dade ballots were rejected by the machines without being counted even once.

The five right-wing justices had become the key element of the Bush-Cheney plot to steal the election. It was, as an editorial in the *PWW* put it, "An American coup."

I was in Tallahassee when the decision came down. The next morning, thousands of protesters who had come by bus from as far away as Miami, marched through the town chanting, "Thou shalt not steal."

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, former President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council told me that the scene in Tallahassee reminded him of Selma, Alabama, where he had marched for the Voting Rights Act in 1965. "This decision is dripping with the blood of those who died for the right to vote," he said. "The Supreme Court has pulled off a judicial coup. This is the most devious decision I have ever seen from the U.S. Supreme Court." He likened it to the Dred Scott decision of 1857 that "Black people have no rights that a white man is bound to respect." Said Lowery, "That decision lived in infamy and this decision will live in infamy as well."

But there was no sense of defeat in the ranks of the marchers. Rev. Jackson called on the crowd outside

the State Capitol to join nationwide protests in defense of the right to vote on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday Jan. 15. "Winning by discount instead of recount leaves the winner illegitimate," Jackson said.

To lose an election by racial targeting and racial profiling is humiliating. We fear that they will seek to govern in the same dishonorable way that they won. This election was essentially taken and stolen. Today, the emperor has no clothes and no shame.

Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees caught the spirit as he addressed a crowd that included hundreds of AFSCME workers from as far away as Miami. "This is not the end," McEntee thundered. "This is the beginning. Today is the first step to take our country back from the Bushes and the Republicans."

One task for the people of Florida in 2002: To reelect in a landslide Florida Supreme Court Justice Harry Lee Anstead, one of the four justices who defied the U.S. Supreme Court in ordering a full recount of the votes in Florida. He is the target of a multi-million dollar Jeb Bush-orchestrated drive to oust him from the bench.

A second and third task were chanted by the marchers: "Jeb is through in 2002! Dubya out the door in 2004." ■



# ***Why the Ruling Party in Mexico Fell***

by Lorenzo Torrez

*Lorenzo Torrez is a member of the National Board of the Communist Party.*

**T**he Partido Revolucionario Independiente (PRI) of Mexico lost control in the July 2 election after 70 years on the throne.

It was interesting to visit Mexico City during the month of September (2000). The daily news media is still discussing what will Mexico be like under PAN leadership? One thing is clear, the up and coming Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD) has already lost one-third of its membership, though they still hold several seats in the House of Deputies by the means of proportional representation. Together they and the PRI hold the majority of votes in the House of Deputies. This may or may not create problems for Fox's party in the coming period.

The reason for the PRD loses are many,

including opportunism among its candidates for office, some suspected or real corruption, and the fact that some were so closely tied to the PAN.

One thing is clear according to opinions given me: The Electrical Workers Union and the Oil Workers Unions are key factors in the anti-privatization movement. Movements such as workers in education, health care, government workers and various political parties, such as PPS Partido Revolucionario de Los Trabajadores, the Socialist Party and others form important sections of this movement under the slogan "Defeat neo-colonialism, our nation is not for sale, Our country must be defended (La patria no se vende, La patria se desfiende!)" These are popular slogans in modern day Mexico.

The consensus among these smaller parties is, the main reason for PRI's downfall was its lack struggle against neoliberalism. The General Secretary of PPS told me the national board of his party was in general agreement with this view.

He went on to point out "the lack of fightback is not new as many now perceive it." It has developed over several decades. In his opinion, the downfall began after World War II. It was part of the development of the Cold War era which was led by President Harry Truman and Mr. Churchill, the leader of the British Parliament at the time. Every PRI administration has been backtracking since 1948. Each administration made one change here and another there, etc. Finally the party forgot for whom they were ruling. The revolutionary spirit of 1910-1917 became weaker with every succeeding administration.

The first blow came in 1948 during a national strike of railroad workers. The legitimate leaders of the labor movement were forced out of office and replaced by government administrators. The Charrismo leadership has been able to hold its power until present. They are situated within the ranks of the present CTM leadership. Once the backbone of the progressive labor movement was broken it became easier for the party in power (PRI) to weaken the political resolve of the masses to defend the interest of the nation, specifically the interest of workers and peasants within the country.

Now we are faced with a new and most likely more aggressive challenge. Come 2001, we will have to deal not only with a right-wing party in power but also with the CEO of the Coca Cola corporation. Mr. Vincente Fox has worked for the interest of Coca Cola all of his adult life. He will attempt to run the government as a CEO runs a corporation. He is essentially a corporate executive and a rabid supporter of neo-colonialism. Furthermore he is a demagogue of the first order. He will lie, and cheat, like all CEOs, without any consideration of the effects his policies might bring on the working masses.

The struggle against Mr. Fox and his party are already taking shape. This was the essence of the national forum I attended as an observer and at the invitation of PPS. The party was a major participant at the conference. In prepara-



AP photo

Above: Workers at the U.S. /Mexican border

Come 2001, we will have to deal not only with a right-wing party in power but also with the CEO of the Coca Cola corporation. Mr. Vincente Fox has worked for Coca Cola all of his adult life. He will attempt to run the government as a C.E.O. runs a corporation.

ration the leadership held many mini conferences in every state of the union. Their delegates were present and worked very hard to hold the conference united on the issue at hand.

In addition to Mr. Fox's extremely demagogic campaign people are talking of an extensive barrage of T.V. and radio 30 second sound bites. They appeared every two minutes all across the nation – a new experience for Mexicans. Where did the money come from? Many suspect much of it came from U.S. corporations. Coca Cola to be sure, but also suspect are the U.S. Republican Party, and the extreme right. In fact many people are demanding a national investigation.

All these are factors says the PPS leadership, however the basic truth is the many decades of PRI refusal to take on the necessary fightback of U.S. corporate encroachment and the refusal to break with U.S. political ideology that capitalism is the answer to all social, political, and economic problems. In addition the PRI refused to admit the growing poverty among campesinos and the less fortunate members of the working masses. Thus their refusal to spend the necessary funds in training technicians of various sorts. Instead most of the sons and daughters of the oligarchs did their studies in the U.S. or in Western European colleges and universities. This process in effect undermined the necessary loyalty of the nation. As you know, capitalists have no loyalty to anyone country, their only loyalty is to make themselves extremely rich.

Nonetheless there is still hope among progressives and what remains of the left forces, like the PPS.

We in the United States need to keep our eye on the ball. Imperialism is not dead. Its intent is to continue swallowing nation states all across the world. The anti-privatization movement is key in holding it back and hopefully defeating its imperialist program. Let us not be fooled by so called "democratic" proclamations such as those being delivered by our own President Clinton. After all his is simply a spokesperson for the huge multinational U.S. corporations that now rule in many parts of the world.

The tactics have been refined – they call for democratic elections. Nonetheless trade sanctions such against Cuba, Iraq, and North Korea are still in use and if that doesn't work military power will be used wherever possible. Thus working-class unity, multi-racial unity and international unity are slogans and practices which we need to continue developing. Mass movements such as Seattle and later Washington D.C. will continue to be required. The struggle is far from over. Organize and fight! Socialism is our goal, but it will take massive struggles to eventually get there!

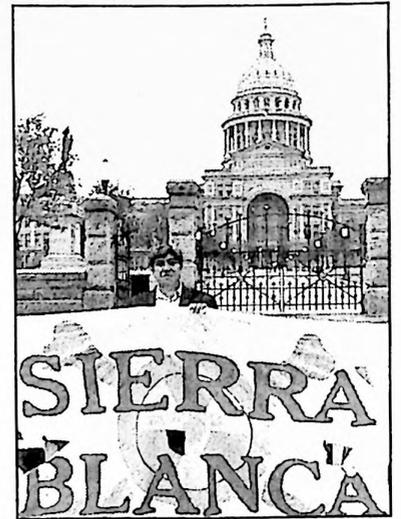
Adelante! ■



Above: former Mexican government lifted subsidies for corn tortillas.



Above right: Mexican Mayor in Austin Texas to protest plans to dump nuclear waste.  
Above left: protesters fight bank bailout in Mexico.



# Imagine Socialism

Morris Zeitlin

Ideology is not something abstract or neutral. It is class generated, and class used body of principles, beliefs, and ideals that guide class political strategies. Ideologies reflect the material interests, views, and aspirations of classes. Accordingly, in the history of class struggle, class ideologies, like the classes that spun them, have been conservative or progressive; conservative when serving an oppressive ruling class to maintain its power, progressive when serving a rising liberating class to achieve power. The most progressive ideology in our time is the socialist ideology of the most progressive class in our time – the modern working class.

Socialist ideology comprises two related elements: 1) The Marxist theory of social evolution through class struggle and the decline of capitalism and the capitalist class; and 2) its succession by the working class and a socialist society. The first is a scientific analysis, precise and explicit. The second is a conclusion deduced from the first. It anticipates a society to be envisioned, aspired to, struggled for, and ultimately planned and built. It is what has been sometimes called the utopian aspect of Marxism.

Now, 'utopian' is a misconceived term in the socialist vocabulary. The misconception stems from the Marx-Engels critique of the utopian socialists who disputed not their visions of life in a socialist society but their misleading belief that subjective desire, voluntary example, and propaganda alone will bring it about.

Ever since the Marx-Engels critique of the utopian socialists, envisioning socialism has been resisted on two counts:

a) that the structure of the future socialist society cannot be predicted, for it will be determined by its own specific historical conditions; and

b) that preoccupation with visions of the future would divert socialists from their struggle for socialism in the present. Although both points are valid, each overlooks factors relevant today. Let's consider each objection at a time.

### Objection one

a) The future is future determined. The

future will, of course, be determined by its specific realities. But it will also be history rooted. In building its own present it will be partly influenced by what it will inherit from its past. We, who today struggle for transforming capitalist society to a socialist one will be that future's past. We need to envision and assert how the social needs the working class is deprived of today will be fulfilled in the socialist society we advocate. Envisioning the future on its eve in history is hence essential to the struggle today. For fighting only for what the working



Marx in a famous passage described his ideal of life in the new society: reading in the morning, fishing at noon and poetry at night.

AP photo

class is against, without a vision of what it is for, makes for a defensive strategy only. But victory presupposes an offensive. And an offensive requires a goal. Working-class vision of its ultimate goal and the will to reach it, is therefore essential to its struggle today.

## Objection two

b) Dreams of the future retard the struggle today. Over the centuries, oppressed classes spun fantasies imagining utopian places where prevailed the freedom and happiness their oppressors denied them. But socialist utopia does not aim to merely soothe the pains of oppression with dreams of an ideal time. It embraces and champions a new way of life in a vision to be not merely enjoyed but to be fought for.

Imagining the socialist future would add an inspiring component to working-class ideology. Presenting bright images of socialist society would make socialism more widely and easily understood and wanted. It would add a new way to combat the confusion and apathy capitalist ideology sows in the ranks of the working class. Today, imaginatively revealing socialism's awesome potential for social revival is a worthy task in the ideological struggle. For the emotional force that imagination adds to reason must surely strengthen working-class consciousness and political will.

Some socialist writers have recognized the value as well as the pitfalls of socialist utopian writing. Socialist utopian literature, wrote one,

can satirize and criticize... and project hopeful trends, reworking them in a picture of future society that draws us on by the force of its imaginative realization...to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way. Krishan Kumar *Utopianism*. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991, pp. 98, 107.

And another observed

that preoccupation with socialist future may indeed inadvertently throttle its realization. Unless disciplined to serve as a helpful aid in the struggle, it could become a diversion. It should be disciplined, individually and collectively, to keep from flying off into utopia for thrill sake and stay committed and harnessed to the struggle. Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*. (New York: Phillip Allen, 1990, pp. 126-127, 170-171.

Unlike the abstract fantasies of most utopian literature, imagining socialism would spring from the solid

ground of Marxist knowledge. It would project the unfulfillable potentials lying concealed within the capitalist system to fulfillment in a socialist society.

Imagine life in a peaceful socialist world of truly united socialist nations, assembled not as competitors to bicker, bargain and bully, but to cooperate, to solve problems in production and exchange, communications and transport, cultural progress, and protection of the world's natural environment.

Imagine socialism ruled by a true democracy, where all public affairs, from workplace and neighborhood councils to the National Congress, are people-governed under a fully empowered Bill of Rights.

Imagine socialism where production and distribution of goods and services is freed from capitalist misuse and put under planned public management to provide for our well-being. Imagine our jobs made secure and us, working less hours to have more leisure time to enjoy the fruits of our labor and our creative talents.

Imagine socialism where the sciences and arts, freed from commercial and military dominance, are inspired only by the human quest for knowledge, wisdom, and beauty to enrich and ennoble human life.

Imagine socialism ending our alienation from our labor, organizing all work and workplaces to engage our ingenuity and skills, to make our jobs into sources of joy, accomplishment, happiness and pride.

Imagine socialism as a higher stage of civilization – the ultimate goal of the foremost class in current history, the ideal it holds high in the struggle for life.

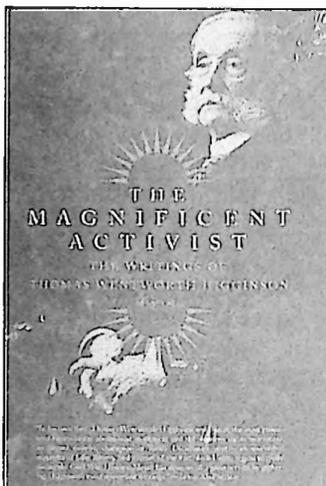
Workers come by this ideal subtly, by gut reaction to their daily oppression. But it takes more than gut feeling to perceive it in depth and embrace it in struggle. And it takes knowledge, organization, strategy and tactics to ultimately bring it about. It takes reading and learning the social science of Marxism and the arts it inspires. And that requires access to easily gotten and used instruments for self education: inexpensive, lucid, and engaging theoretical and fictional works.

We need to raise young working-class writers, attuned to the ways of their generation, to spread Marxist teachings and write stories and novels honoring the wisdom, dignity, and strength of the working class and its ideal of a just and rational society.

And we need to enable their works to reach working people by means of attractive, low-price, pocket-size pamphlets – the proven method of socialist publishing and working-class book buying.

We need to ever better attack and dispel the myth dominant ideology propagates that the world capitalism made and rules is all the world can be. ■

## Books for Activists



Since we are a movement fighting for the people's well-being, we therefore must be a thinking movement as well. This column will recommend good books to help us in this, and try to explain the particular value of each book. An activist keeps learning. Please feel free to comment on this review.

*The Magnificent Activist: The Writings of Thomas Wentworth Higginson 1823 - 1911.*

Edited by Howard N. Meyer. DaCapo Press. \$25.00 618 pp.

In this book we met a worthwhile person: an anti-slavery and women's rights activist, a Civil War colonel of an African American regiment and an essayist who helped shape our bourgeois-democratic culture. To know him is to draw closer to our country.

Born in Cambridge Mass, in 1823, a descendant of a Puritan Clergyman and colonial merchants, he came quite early into militant anti-slavery work. In 1854, he lead a "Vigilance Committee" that attempted the freeing of ex-slave Anthony burns from the federal courthouse in Boston.

During the Civil War, he became a colonel of the First South Carolina Volunteers, a regiment of freed slaves. His writings on that experience are valuable as he attempted to explain the conditions of Black people to whites during this period. He worked to overcome prejudice.

The Civil War once over, his main work was in the formation of American culture. And we have from him essays on Black spirituals, women's rights and on contemporary literary figures such as Longfellow and Henry James. He was a splendid example of the combination of thought and action.

Marxist-Leninists would term Higginson a bourgeois democratic figure, one who for reforms but did not see the need for working-class power. Such figures are our temporary allies, both in today's practical politics and in ideology. And such alliances are necessary for the sake of political headway. But such headway in our bourgeois society requires that we understand it well. Reading this book will help.

Howard Finstein ■

# Book Reviews

*Richard Rorty's Politics, Liberalism at the End of the American Century*, by Markar Melkonian, Humanity Books, N.Y. 226 pp.

In this book Melkonian skillfully accomplishes a most daunting task - making sense of Richard Rorty's logically incoherent politics.

Rorty, on of the more noted public intellectuals in the U.S. is the author of many books and articles extolling modern day pragmatism and capitalism. His books include *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), *Consequences of Pragmatism* 1(1982) and *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth* (1991).

Melkonian points out that Rorty considers himself a missionary for the American Dream who holds that "we should be more willing ... to celebrate bourgeois capitalist society." Melkonian, unlike Rorty whose liberalism he characterizes as abstract "vapid ventilation's" about lessening suffering and supporting freedom, discusses the problems of contemporary society from the "perspective of promoting workers as a class to state power."

In a central chapter, "Freedom and Liberalism in Practice," Melkonian painstakingly compares Rorty's notion of the freedoms bestowed by the corporate capitalist state and the reality. Rorty, for example, fully supports the views of Milan Kundera (*Art of the Novel*) regarding the "European Spirit of Freedom" which "is the sanctity of a sphere of conscience, a private sphere protected against the incursions of the state." Rorty includes the U.S. in the concept. One can only wonder how anyone who knows anything about the role of McCarthyism in the country, or the continuing role of the FBI and other government agencies in the surveillance of individuals could believe that the role of the state is not in the business of violating the "private sphere of conscience." Rorty's sursum corda to bourgeois democracy does not ring true.

Melkonian exposes this liberal balderdash with a refer-

ence to the Marxist theory of the state. He quotes Louis Althusser: "The state is a 'machine' of repression, which enables the ruling classes ... to insure their domination over the working class." The author explodes the idea that state institutions found in the "liberal North Atlantic" bourgeois democracies function to allow people "to pursue their own idiosyncratic visions of personal perfection."

Rorty's two main liberal mantras are 1) American [North Atlantic, European, etc] capitalism is history's best example of the extension of 'freedom'; 2) capitalism has brought about the greatest amelioration of human suffering. In his chapter "Decency and Liberalism in Practice," Melkonian will cast Rorty's view "in bad light." Rorty says for example, that the liberal state has a need "for continual exposure of suffering and injustice." The reality is just the opposite. Rorty must hold the intelligence of his readers in low esteem (perhaps rightly so for his readers.) The instances of cover-ups and the repression and falsification of information regarding suffering and injustice around the world are legion. Melkonian discusses one example - many more come to mind. He details the U.S. role in covering up the actions of Japan in WW II in the killing 20 million Chinese in order to protect high ranking and politically useful Japanese leaders from prosecution.

It is impossible to understand how Rorty can be taken seriously. The whole history of the Cold War belies any interest by U.S. imperialism (aka "liberal democracy") to ameliorate suffering (unless there was clear political gain rather than to function as a "machine of

repression."

The formal acceptance of liberal institutions by the bourgeoisie is not guarantee against repression. Some readers may see Bill of Rights socialism reflected in Melkonian's comment that even if these institutions were effective in reducing suffering (sometimes) lets "have them, then, but let us have them within the context of working-class state power, rather than corporate capitalist rule."

In his last chapter, "Of Light Minds and Heavy Hands," Melkonian gives the coup de grace to any lingering suspicion that Rorty is a serious thinker. He also suggests that anyone under the spell of Rorty's world view may be helped by reading the works of, among others, Victor Perlo and Michael Parenti.

Rorty unabashedly admits that the political purposes of "us social democrats" justifies " putting politics first and tailoring philosophy to suit." I might add that this is one of the major accusations leveled (falsely) against Marxism, but here proudly proclaimed as a social democratic tactic!

While some Marxists may not agree with all of Melkonian's arguments and characterizations (especially concerning the former Soviet Union), this book is a brilliant expose not only of Rorty's twisted apologetics for Western imperialist state formations, but of liberalism and pragmatism in general. ■

*Thomas Riggins*

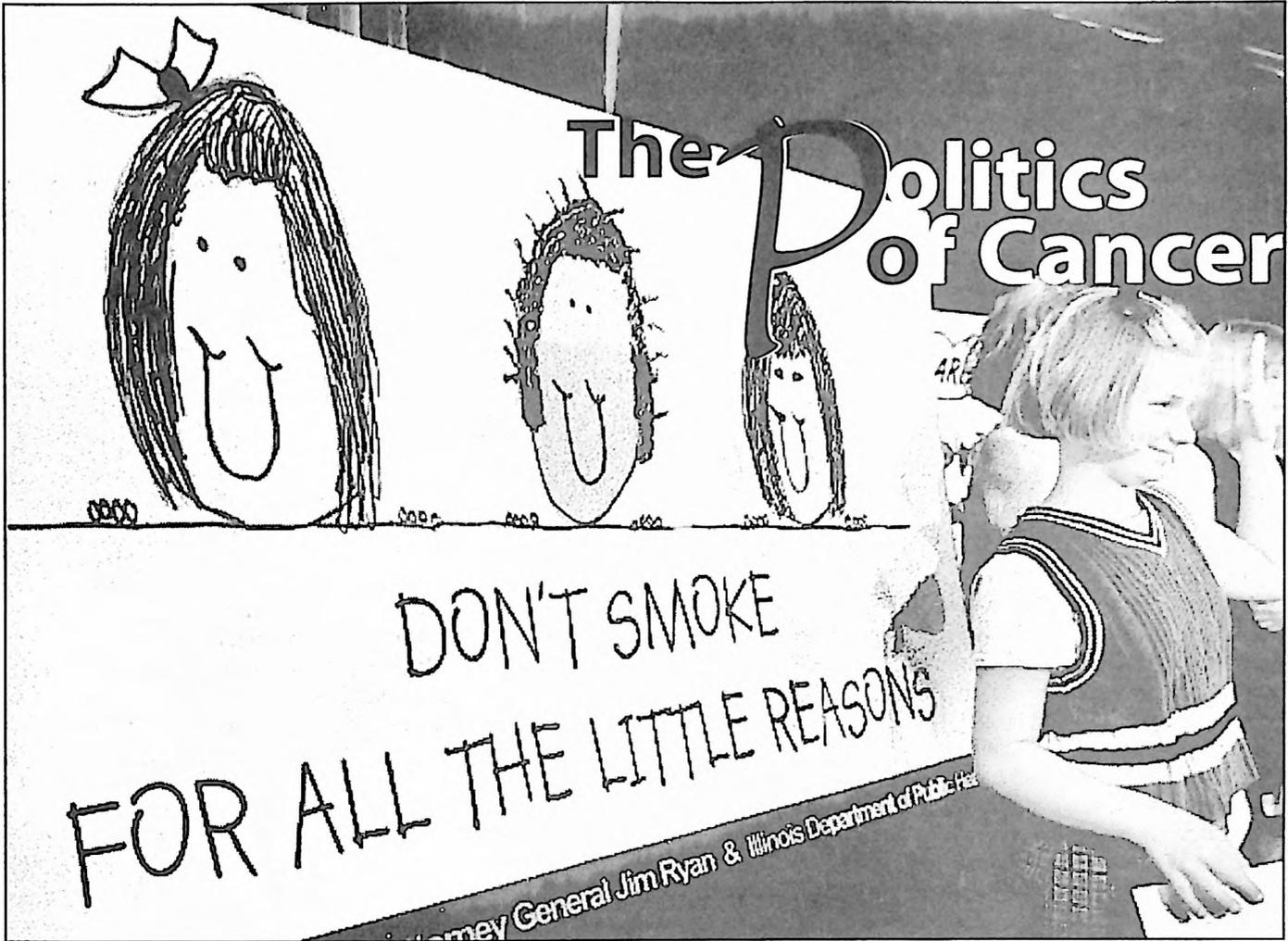
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drugs that are affordable to everyone.

This is truly a worldwide struggle. In all developed industrial countries, except the United States, workers, their unions and broad sections of people are fighting against the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization in their demands to downsize and privatize strong government programs, specifically health and pension programs. In every developed country people are successfully defending their programs against privatization and the CIGNAs and Aetnas of the world. But, in the developing countries the opposite is happening. The troika of WTO, IMF and the Bank have been increasingly successful in forcing weak and corrupt governments to accede to their demands. Recently Argentina agreed to these terms and is forcing a new private pension system upon all newly hired federal workers. Against the popular opposition, that government is forcing the IMF requirements on Argentinean people.

It has been well documented that IMF/WB imperialism is forcing these same fragile governments to drop their government responsibilities and programs by accepting for profit health insurance companies, e.g. Cigna and Aetna, to administer and profit from their health service programs.

Unity between the haves and the have not countries is an essential to fighting for world peace and economic justice. The struggle for strong central, regional and local democratically controlled governments and their health and pension programs will be central to that success. In that sense the struggle for an independent, strong United Nations and World Health Organization is part and parcel of that fight. ■



Don Sloan

*The Politics of Cancer*  
 Revisited By Samuel S. Epstein, MD  
 (East Ridge Press, Ltd., 1999)

I liked Doctor Sam Epstein from the start. I first caught him in an interview over WBAI talk radio and took to his muckraker attitude and anti-establishment approach to oncology. He did not have to convince me that there is a politics to cancer, as with every other disease in the world. He grabbed my attention at once as he went into the class and racist approaches to medicine and public health. He notes there is poverty behind every disease, reminiscent of Voltaire's statement the "behind every fortune is a crime." I liked it even more when I learned the book has a forward by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich). Other praises came from highly respected populist activists, like Quentin Young, MD,

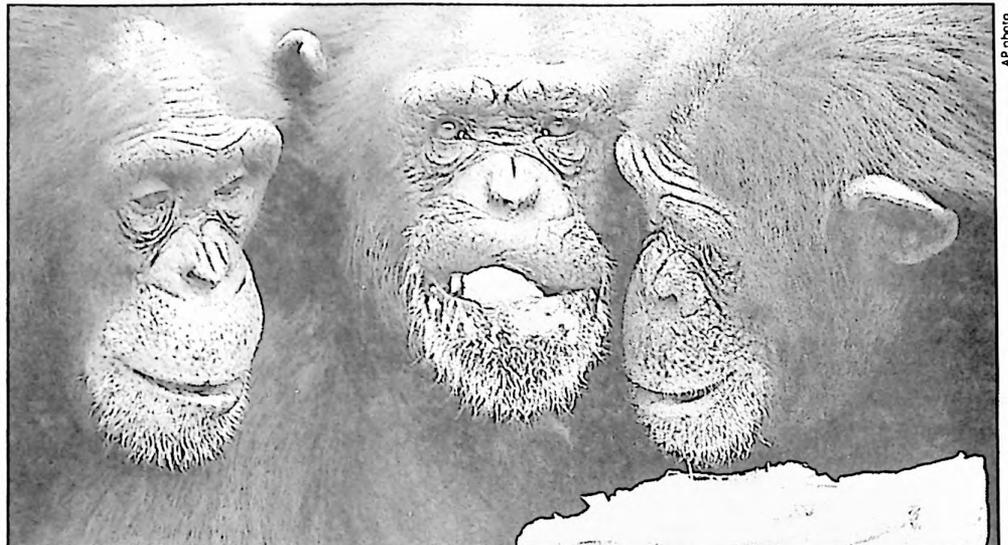
president, of the American Public Health Association (APHA), long associated with progressive health care causes, Robert Wages, President Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers of Union International, AFL-CIO, and Barbara Seaman, co-founder of the National Women's Health Network.

I was sold. He could only unsell me with the contents. Regrettably, in some ways he did. In many ways he didn't as this review will reveal.

There are those in the medical community who have always been somewhat suspicious of the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. Those two icons of cancer health care in America one federal, the other private. Epstein's radio comments, stressed in his pages, indict the NCI and ACS for making repeated false claims that we are winning the war against cancer – claims made to create public and Congressional support for massive increases in budgetary appropriations Epstein stresses these concerns and



Protesting a hospital closing.



Human and animal physiology is so different that animal testing is not only cruel, but also useless.

certainly makes his cases against both.

That cancer has social implications is not a new concept. There are always regrets when others who probably know better, like Michio Kushi and his *The Cancer Prevention Diet* (St. Martin Press) and Doctor Frederick B. Levinson in his *The Causes and Prevention of Cancer* (Stein and Day), didn't get around to it. Certainly, Epstein's radio comments were not a betrayal or false advertising. Lambaste, he did. There are two problems, however. I like my gadflies to occasionally break out of that role and offer solutions, which do exist, especially if the writer is obviously aware of those social aspects of health care. And then there are the probably unintentional contradictions throughout the pages that are never substantiated one way or the other, and I was left in something of a fuzz. Again, judge for yourself.

The tome of almost 800 pages is made longer because you are really reading two books in one. Almost the entire first half, TOC identified, is the *Politics of Cancer*, 1978, and the reader has to always keep in mind that some of the material may be dated and no longer valid, even though it might be modified in the second half, *The Politics of Cancer*, 1998. Then it requires a look back or the realization that Epstein is indeed au courant and you go on from there. A little disconcerting.

Doctor Epstein does cover it all, eventually. After all, he has 800 pages to do it in. It is not easy keeping up with a subject that is as active as cancer; new carcinogens are discovered daily, it seems. Even his coverage of the soy story is not outmoded by the awareness that Monsanto and the other food chemical giants, in their penchant toward genetically modifying our food supplies, have picked on corn and soy to the point where it is difficult for the consumer to find non-modified versions. He does take the chemical combines to task for their carcinogen-

spreading practices.

But perhaps the greatest confusion is Epstein's contradictions over animal testing, something that rates a whole chapter. He states that although it is controversial there is agreement by most qualified scientists that if a chemical causes a cancer in animal tests, then there is a strong likelihood that it will also cause cancer in exposed humans. He adds there is no practical and reasonable alternative to their use. Sam Epstein needs to do more homework, since just the opposite is true. The problem here is that he uses such practices as a solution to his disquiet. He asks many times in the book why is it that we are not further along in our management of this pathology. And a part of his answer is that the NCI and ACS allocate too much of their budgets on administration and bureaucracy, something he screamed out on the radio, and all true, of course. But then his solution is for those funds to be turned toward lower animal testings. Wow! What a leap from concern to ludicrous answers.

Javier Burgos and others have clearly shown how, along with that misappropriation of funds, the single greatest reason for cancer management delays is our reliance on research data from lower animals to homo sapiens that cannot be transferred. Doctor Epstein should know better. Human and animal physiology and anatomy are just so different that the derived information is not only nonreplicable, it is detrimental. There are enough reports throughout the literature that indicate our reliance on lower animal information has given us a false sense of security. Some agents deemed safe in the lab animal prove to be carcinogenic in humans, and vice versa.

Think about it: how could a product be given, for example, to a rat and interpolate the results to humans? The rat lives in a sewer in water and waste that would kill a human. The rodent ingests garbage and feces, has a GI

tract that was raised on vermin from birth, can gnaw through concrete and compresses its body to crawl through a crack in the door. And Epstein wants to use that data for little Dick and Jane? Give me a break! As for alternatives, the new millennium has brought with it computer technology, ultrasonography and positive electron tomography (PET) that can duplicate the human organism on a screen, produce reaction results with uncanny accuracy and does not harm a single animal unnecessarily. And in addition we have the genome. Why are they not in use? The answer is simple, and Epstein knows it. We are mired down into tradition and FDA dinosaur regulations and those machines cost money, which cuts into the profits of the pharmaceuticals.

He goes on and on with many examples of why facilities should be shifted from elegant wall-to-wall carpeted offices for NCI and ACS execs to guinea pig menageries. Later on he gets into the British parallel, as he calls it, and complains that like here, too much public funding is given to the pharmaceuticals to do research and development (R&D) for new drugs and then when productive, the manufacturing profits fall to the corporations at enormous markups, all quite true. For that I thank Doctor Epstein. But his solutions are to use more animals, increase the doses of agents given to them to better validate the findings, and avoid premature abandonment of the tests before the animals have had time to develop the tumors. Nice beginning; sour conclusions.

On the brighter side are his data and warnings about mammography. Many in the field have pondered if we have been overdoing it a bit, falling prey to the American Radiology Association lobby and the major conglomerates like General Electric (GE) and their competitions to do more and more screening. Hospitals, clinics and doctors offices have become swamped with chic and clever posters and promos that clamor for screening mammography at ages dropping from 60 to 50 to now even 40. "Pick up a pin point tumor before it can be felt by doctor or you," is the cry.

Epstein points to the folly of this excessive use of radiation, and does present decent statistics to make his point of view, something sorely lacking elsewhere in the book when he often asks the reader to accept his meaning and comments. He urges the use of self-breast exam (SBE) that has been so valuable when properly taught and applied and even states, in dramatic fashion to make his point, that a mammography in non-high risk cases is wasteful and misleading before menopause. He stresses what has always been taught but glided over: that the under-45 SBE is the way to go and a reliance on the expensive radiation exposure becomes a subterfuge. Women don't do it because it is an uncomfortable manipulation and, if they weren't schooled in SBE, ends up with no screening until too late in life to be preventative.

The author goes back and forth once in a while with information that to the less astute reader, might be con-



*Computer technology, ultra sound testing and positive electron tomography can duplicate body functions on the screen and does not harm a single animal.*

tradictory. On page 384 he suggests that smoking is (sic) not the only cause for lung cancer, leaving something to the environment and even diet. But 25 pages later, he seems to be suggesting that the environmental data is just too spotty and vague, so maybe its smoking after all. I wish he had been more definite.

He does report on the other alarming carcinogens, such as pesticides. The recent spraying for the western Nile virus can be used by the doctor the next time around when he updates his information in part three. Certainly, he tries to make a case for the indiscriminate use of such products that have caused far more harm than good, and that the DDT ban, for example, is perhaps too little, too late.

Epstein thankfully takes to task the humongous drug houses and their suppliers that allow for the profits over people priority to get in their way. He nicely points out that salespeople are victims of their own hype.

Part Two, the 1998 section, does deliver his message that gets a little lost in the massive and mixed data throughout both volumes. He states that cancers are largely preventable (his italics), if (sic) the real causes are understood. Bravo. He argues further that there is a political priority that is distorted in a system that puts guns before butter and profits before people. His theme is that cancer has become a medical industry that is being proselytized by the pharmaceutical industry that enjoys a markup ten times greater than any other and has no controls in sight. For that alone, the 800 pages are worth the read. I wish he had not assumed the reader would take him on faith and drama, although with this much information covering such a vast subject, more evidence would need another 800 pages. Perhaps smaller versions to say it all would be wise, because except for his rather foolhardy and outdated lower animal test pleas, Epstein's lessons are to be well taken. I look forward to his future works. ■

