



HOMeward

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WIN-WIN-WIN-WIN!

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by Paula

It seems so rare that the "mere" citizenship of Sacramento win the many battles inflicted on us by stupid laws or misdirected funds. Yet lately, after taking a bit of stock, there could seem a slew of victories (actually just a few, but big).

First, and foremost since the fight has lasted for several years, I will mention **Sacramento County's inclusionary housing ordinance**. In December 2004, the

Sacramento County Board of Supervisors passed the long awaited ordinance that will require any housing development in the unincorporated areas of Sacramento to include 6% of the housing for low-income, 8% for very low income and 3% for extremely low income residents. Housing advocates have been fighting all the way during the long process of writing an ordinance that will in effect get housing built for the poorest of our citizens. At first developers wanted the ordinance to allow them to

just dedicate some land, to be built by someone else (and therefore possibly never built). Housing advocates would not accept this and demonstrated one Christmas season by gifting little bags of dirt to the Supervisors with the message "Dirt does not equal housing!" The land dedication model was scratched. Then the struggle became over the percentages. Housing advocates began campaigning with the slogan "5 - 5 - 5", indicating we would like 5% for low, very low and extremely low incomes. Most

developers didn't even like the idea of an inclusionary ordinance, and they liked providing housing for the extremely low-income renters even less. But they stayed at the table, one developer saying that if they weren't at the table, then they might end up on the menu. Finally agreement was reached for the current 5 - 6 - 3% requirements, even though it was argued that extremely low-income citizens were not less important than low and very

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An Agenda of Plunder

Released by Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

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by Timothy Harris

Francis Fox Piven is professor of political science and sociology at the graduate school of the City University of New York. She is co-author with Richard Cloward of a number of award-winning books, including *Regulating the Poor*, *The Poor People's Movement*, *The Breaking of the American Social Compact*, and *Why Americans Still Don't Vote*. Her latest book, published in 2004, is *The War at Home*. Seattle's *Real Change* caught up with Professor Piven when she was in town last month to speak at the annual conference of the Statewide Poverty Action Network.

Real Change: So your new book makes the point that the war and the events of 9/11 have provided political cover for a huge trans-

fer of wealth and other sorts of shifts in national priorities. What are some examples of that?

Piven: I guess the more apparent examples are the tax cuts which are geared to reducing taxes on the wealthiest people in the United States and corporations, much more than ordinary working people. Those taxes were justified in Congress as being necessary in time of war. It's a pretty obvious use of war to redistribute domestic wealth. You usually think of war as a strategy in which one nation plunders another nation's resources. In this case our leaders were trying to do that for sure - they invaded a nation with a lot of oil resources - but they also were using the fog of war to impose their own agenda, which is an agenda of plunder in the United States. I think another dimension of that is the environmental changes that are occurring. Now those don't have the acute pinch that cutting your wages does

because it takes a much longer time to feel the environmental affects of increased pollution. But this administration is committed to the use of public lands for private business - more logging, more drilling. That's a heritage, a public heritage, and it's being given away.

Another example, not so related to the war: the President and his party were able to increase subsidies to pharmaceutical companies. As if they needed subsidies! They are among the most comfortable industries in the United States. Bush is promoting the Medicare Prescription Drug Act as evidence that he really is a compassionate conservative! That act give big subsidies to the pharmaceutical companies and it also protects them from competition from drugs imported from Canada. It also protects them from any effort by the government to use its buying power to force down drug prices. This is an agenda of plunder.

One of the features of this that I'm not sure I entirely understand is the reckless quality of it. Ordinarily, when you look through history and across the globe, elites try to ensure that they will remain elites over time. They look for stability. This regime is so risk-taking, so reckless, that it's as though they don't have a time horizon. Their roots are not sunk in society. They want to take it and run. I find that very, very strange, and also very alarming. Because they're taking it from us, and they may run, but we will inherit the damage that they do.

RC: During this election, the term "voter suppression" cropped up a lot in the media. This isn't anything new is it?

Piven: Well, you know, Americans like to think that the political parties work to turn out the vote. It's a very easy, pretty sort of democratic faith. But if you look

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Released by Street News Service

Compiled by Patty Lane

October 2004

Two men in Ohio have been indicted in the beating death of a homeless man. According to the Columbus Dispatch, a third suspect is discussing a possible plea deal and may testify against the other two. Daniel Fetty, 38, was found naked in a trash container October 2. He died at a Columbus hospital just hours after being found. Police say he was beaten with boards and bricks. Acquaintances of the victim say he had just begun making salads and washing dishes at a restaurant and was saving for an apartment. The killers, both of Waverly, were indicted by a grand jury on aggravated murder charges. This is the first slaying in four decades in Waverly, a city about 60 miles south of Columbus. All three men are being held on \$1 million bond.

An Arizona resident who was once over her head in debt is teaching a group of homeless people lessons of financial hardship and credit repair to keep from making the same mistakes. Darlene Sallee self-published a book called *I Owe, I Owe, So Off to Work I Go*, and tells the Arizona Republic she never forgot her painful experience. "The book has sold well, but I wondered what else I could do with it," Sallee said. She created an evening financial class for Central Arizona Shelter Services, a Phoenix homeless shelter helping them with everything from the basics of budgeting to credit repair. CASS Development Coordinator Bill Manson says it's been great for clients. "Darlene has been very good and receptive with our clients. She doesn't talk down to them at all. Her classes bring a level of awareness that truly makes a difference." Sallee provides all her own materials for class, since there is no budget to cover it and also

gives each participant a free copy of her book. "I just try to give them tools to get them to think about money and priorities," Sallee says. "People have wound up here not because they're stupid or want to be in the system, but because something serious happened. I just feel like it's a gift to be able to spend time with people who are really trying to get out of the system. I know how hard it is to get out when you're at such a low point, but I feel like I'm making a little dent."

A Hawaii judge has ordered a homeless man to curb his shopaholic ways after the man racked up debt and committed forgery. Leon W. Grant was living at a homeless shelter but according to Deputy Prosecutor Mark Simonds, "was spending a great deal of money on clothing.... He was known for his Tommy Bahama shirts." Grant was two months away from completing a drug treatment program and clearing his record of forgery and theft charges when he was terminated from the program last October. He was later indicted on federal bank fraud charges and spent time in federal detention before being placed on five years' probation. The 44-year-old Wailuku resident was found guilty of 19 counts of second-degree forgery, second-degree theft and attempted second-degree theft in 2001 cases. He was charged with writing bad checks on his own and others' Bank of Hawaii accounts. Grant said he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, which affected his drug use. The judge warned Grant that he would face harsher penalties if he reoffends. "And no more shopping at Tommy Bahama," the judge said, "until you're financially stable."

November 2004

Homeless activists are upset over a government drive to use the latest in technology to track and count the home-

less in Ohio. According to *Weird News Online*, it's a drive to better tailor services at shelter and food banks, but women's rights advocates say it puts battered women at risk. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is now requiring regional agencies helping the homeless start collecting and sharing detailed personal information including social security numbers and disability information. But protections like firewalls and secure technology in place is not enough according to Cindy Southworth, director of technology at the National Network to End Domestic Violence. She says pooling data of victims of domestic violence puts them at risk of being found and possibly killed by their batterers and wants domestic-violence shelters to be exempt from passing on information to the local network. She worries about unique identifiers HUD requires shelters to collect such as date of birth and ethnicity. "It is actually quite simple if you look at the raw data to find your wife, if you know your partner's date of birth, ethnicity and how many children she has," she said. For battered women using services outside the shelter, such as a food bank, there is no exemption potentially putting them at higher risk. "So the food-bank volunteer hands her a bag of groceries, but puts all sorts of dangerous and invasive data in a statewide system," Southworth said. "That's happening as I speak."

HUD acknowledges the concerns but argues the system is secure with a minimum of eight layers of security that allow shelters to protect sensitive data," says HUD spokesman Brian Sullivan. "It's true this isn't worth one life, but when you understand just how secure these systems are and the kind of data that would be available if some rocket scientist could manage to crack this, you

would see that HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) provides a more secure data-collection and reporting system than currently exists," he said. In Hamilton County, which includes Cincinnati, all domestic-violence shelters will be participating in the system by the end of the year. However, the ACLU is not persuaded by assurances. Emily J. Martin, a staff attorney for the ACLU Union's Women's Rights Project says the system could be bypassed by a stalker who hacks into the system or works for a service agency. "Batterers are an extremely motivated group who will often go to incredible lengths to figure out where their victims have fled to," Martin said. "It's not an idle concern."

PETA is handing out fur coats. The animal rights group is helping Detroit's neediest by donating dozens of fur coats to the area's homeless and will be passing them out this month under a banner reading "Free Fur Coats." Consumers who have changed their way and gone fur-free donated the coats going to Detroit's homeless just in time for winter. "We can't bring these animals back, but we can send a message that only people truly struggling to survive have any excuse for wearing fur," says PETA President Ingrid E. Newkirk. Over the years, PETA has received thousands of fur coats from people who came to believe it is animal cruelty. The group uses them in library displays, anti-fur fashion shows, street theater, and other educational events designed to convince consumers that animals should not be fashion victims. PETA has previously distributed fur coats to the homeless throughout the U.S., the U.K., and Canada. This will be the group's first fur-coat giveaway in Detroit.

Vegetation along a state highway in Oregon has been cleared to discourage homeless camps in Medford. The Oregon Department of Transportation cleared juniper and trimmed trees between Biddie Road and Interstate 5 primarily to displace three homeless camps. According to the *Mail Tribune*, the agency completed the work at the request of the Medford City Council. "Transient camps are a very,

very tough issue because it's societal," said John Vial, ODOT district manager. He said workers notified people living in the bushes a couple of days before the vegetation was removed. The magazines, blankets, bottles and cans that were left behind were taken to the dump. Councilman John Michaels was the primary member requesting the cleanup. He first suggested it several months ago at a council meeting. "It's not safe that we have homeless people sleeping along the freeway," said Michaels, adding that he also was concerned about camps being so close to the bike path. It took four days, two staff members, and a Department of Corrections work crew to clear the vegetation, at a cost of \$5,000. Medford police say the area has few crime reports. "I can't think of any problems we've had along there for a long time," says Lt. Mike Moran. "It's a health issue," he said, adding that it's a health risk to have homeless camps and no available sanitation facilities, especially so close to Bear Creek.

December, 2004

An unsettling Vietnam-era trend is returning around the country, as U.S. veterans from Iraq begin to trickle in to homeless shelters. "I have talked to enough [shelters] to know we are getting them. It is happening and this nation is not prepared," says Linda Boone, executive director of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. One veteran, who was injured in Iraq and suffers from depression, tells UPI the military is not getting veterans the care they need. "It is all about numbers," says Seabees Petty Officer Luis Arellano. "Instead of getting quality care, they were trying to get everybody demobilized during a certain time frame. If you had a problem, they said, 'Let the [Department of Veterans Affairs] take care of it.'" Arellano was living out of his truck on and off for three months after returning from Iraq last September, where shrapnel had nearly severed his left thumb. He still has trouble moving it and blames the military for not getting him the care he needs. The Pentagon has acknowledged some early problems and

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Carnage in Brazil

Released by Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by Paula Mathieu

A call has been issued by Ocas, the street newspaper in São Paulo, Brazil, for the world to respond to a sudden spree of brutal attacks on homeless people sleeping in the nation's streets.

From August 19 to 30, 16 separate attacks occurred against homeless people sleeping in the downtown area of São Paulo. All were struck once in the head with a blunt instrument while asleep. Seven of the victims died; the other nine remain hospitalized.

"The criminal was a professional," said Alderon Costa, director of Rede Rua, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with homeless people in São Paulo. "[The person] used an instrument and beat their heads just once to kill them. He knew what he wanted."

While state police forces have been investigating the attacks, many local NGOs believe that the police themselves might be involved. In addition to the precise nature of the beatings, the attacks have all occurred downtown, an area once largely abandoned that is now slated for revitalization.

Downtown São Paulo is an area usually patrolled heavily by police — one attack occurred just outside a police

station — and security cameras record events from several nearby residential buildings. Police have not requested any of the video recordings despite the fact that several individuals who live or work in nearby have offered them. No public statement about whether the police have viewed or even accepted the videos has been released.

One victim's description of his two alleged attackers led to further suspicion of the police. According to local reports, a policeman threatened one of the victims in his hospital room on August 30, pressing a gun against the victim during a discussion.

Federal police forces have been called in to investigate. Several NGOs are demanding a response from the public authorities. "It's necessary to put pressure on the investigators and not let those responsible for these deaths go unpunished," said Luciano Rocco of Ocas.

Rocco said that e-mails, letters and phone calls from ordinary citizens around the world may help bring the responsible parties to justice.

While these attacks are unusual because of their consistency, brutality and execution within a short time, local NGOs and church groups point out that violence is common in the lives of

Brazil's homeless people. While no official census exists to count the number of homeless individuals in Brazil, a local research foundation estimated that there were roughly 10,000 living in the streets of São Paulo in 2003.

Red Rua and Ocas believe the figure is much higher, perhaps double, and that violence is part of everyday life for many of these people. They offer the following recent events as evidence:

On the day before the attacks in São Paulo, a homeless person was beheaded in Sorocaba, in the countryside of São Paulo State. His head has not been found. In July, six homeless people went to hospital after being poisoned in São Paulo. A homeless person was shot to death in Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais, on September 4.

In Rio de Janeiro, county guards systematically threaten homeless people. Police compel street dwellers to abandon wealthy neighborhoods and tourist sites by taking their few belongings and throwing them into trash collectors. Any resistance to this action meets with violence, according to Rocco. This policy, undertaken by the city's mayor, is officially named "Urban Control Operation."

Rocco believes that such

widespread violence against Brazil's vulnerable and poor results from a culture of fear and prejudice. "Most Brazilians see homeless people with prejudice, with a mixture of pity and fear," said Rocco. "Many see homeless people as people who do not want to work or that are involved with some kind of illicit activity. Our mainstream media and governments contribute to this misperception," said Rocco.

Media attention to these attacks and public demonstrations has prompted a response from the government. On September 1, Patrus Ananias, the minister for social development and combating

hunger, promised to create a forum of ministers to discuss public policy and homelessness in Brazil.

On September 9, a group of NGO representatives and activists were scheduled to meet with an inter-ministerial committee in Brasília, Brazil's capital. According to Rocco, the meeting was later cancelled and then rescheduled. He said NGOs are skeptical about whether the government will follow through with their investigations in São Paulo.

"What we foresee, if nothing is done is that these crimes will be forgotten and unsolved, as usually happens when they involve poor people," said Rocco. "Citizens of foreign countries will help if they show their concern about the situation of homeless people in Brazil to public authorities, by writing to Brazilian embassies in their countries or to their own embassies in Brazil."

Rocco believes that international readers of street papers can apply necessary pressure to investigate — and hopefully end — these attacks. "Please encourage your readers to write to the Brazilian embassy in the U.S. or to the U.S. embassy in Brazil," he said. "We should not let these lives be forgotten or let the criminals to go unpunished."

The Boston office of the Consulate General of Brazil is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and is located at 20 Park Plaza, Suite 810 Boston, MA, 02116. The telephone number is 617-542-4000 and the fax number is 617-542-4318. The Consulate General's e-mail address is consular.4@consulate-brazil.org. The U.S. Consulate General in São Paulo's e-mail address is contact@embaixadaamerica.org.br.

Paula Mathieu can be reached at mathieps@bc.edu. Reprinted from *Spare Change News*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 2004.

NASNA Newsbriefs Continued

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delays in treating soldiers returning from the conflict, but it says the situation has been fixed. Nearly 300,000 veterans are homeless on any given night, and almost half served during the Vietnam era, according to the Homeless Veterans Coalition. Some advocates fear that similar combat experiences in Vietnam and Iraq mean that these first few homeless Iraq War veterans are the crest of a wave. "This is what happened with

the Vietnam vets. It is like watching history being repeated," says John Keaveney, chief operating officer of a shelter and treatment program in Los Angeles. An Army study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in July showed that 17 percent of service members returning from Iraq met screening criteria for major depression, generalized anxiety disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Two homeless men in North Carolina who were trying to stay warm unknowingly set a vacant house ablaze, causing around \$45,000 in damage. Fire officials tell the *Greensboro News Record* the men were using a metal can filled with charcoal to heat up the house, but left the can burning when they went to sleep. The coals burned through the can, setting the wood floor on fire. "When our crews arrived they found the two males, awake

them, and got them out," says Captain Denita Lynch, a spokesman for the High Point Fire Department. The homeless men, both 21 years old, were charged with misdemeanor breaking and entering. Lynch says that as the weather turns cold, people often look for shelter in abandoned homes, sometimes causing a fire. "This is a normal occurrence. We go through this every season."

Agenda of Plunder Continued from page 1

at history with a more callous eye, I would make the case that the political parties work harder to prevent voting, especially by people who are either likely to cause trouble for their party - poor people, immigrants - and to prevent voting among people who will vote for the other party. So in a way we have party competition through vote suppression. It's been a very prominent pattern in American political history. That certainly has been true with regard to the efforts of political parties at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century to reduce voting among immigrant working people, and the ferocious efforts of southern elites to eliminate the Black vote in the south, but it's still going on.

We have a structure that permits vote suppression that includes election officials who are partisan, who themselves are running for election. Nothing could be more bizarre. The absence of any national right to vote, or any standards for the conduct of elections, except for the Voting Rights Act, and the act of resistance to the expansion of voter registration opportunities by political officials up and down the system, from the national system, to the state, to the county, and the fact that Election Day is not a holiday.

Americans work more hours as each year goes by, and they do that because their wages are shrinking and they're trying to maintain the same standard of living. So as Americans work more hours, the fact that Election

Day is not a holiday becomes more and more onerous.

RC: There's been a lot of talk, particularly out in blogland, about how exit polls have been more accurate in non-battleground states than in places where the election was more contested. Is this another stolen election?

Piven: Maybe. I think we don't know. I think it's possible. I think for the time being it doesn't do us any good to keep stewing over that possibility, since we can't know if it's true unless somebody spills, and it has to be more than one person who squeals because if one person squeals, that person will be immediately discredited. There is no record, apart from the computer record, of the vote. And it's been arranged so there would be no record. And we don't know the codes. We don't know. It's certainly a possibility. But what we should do is fight very hard for systems through which we can check those computers. And there are - those systems do exist - it's just that our election officials, and the computer companies themselves, have resisted that. So we shouldn't allow computers to be unchecked and uncheckable. They should not be permitted in our elections. You know when the Carter Center was asked if they would monitor the election in the U.S. it declined, and one of the reasons it declined is that it said it's an election system with so many different practices it's chaotic, we can't monitor it. And we can't monitor it either until we straighten it out.

RC: What should we be most concerned about in terms of the Bush administration agenda on poverty over his second terms?

Piven: We should be concerned about everything, but we should be concerned about the further erosion of income supports, which includes unemployment insurance. They did not extend federal unemployment insurance since 2003. TANF becomes more restrictive, more punitive, more derogatory of its clients. They want to privatize the Medicaid program because it's a big program. And union rights are very, very important, and worker rights generally. The attack, for example, on overtime pay standards is very important if it succeeds, if it is in fact implemented. We should work on a minimum wage increase. Five dollars and 15 cents is the minimum wage. That's the lowest minimum wage in history, in real terms.

RC: Why are they so fixated on Social Security?

Piven: Because there's money to be made there. Money to be made by bankers, investment firms, brokers, and financial advisors, and maybe also because the Social Security reserve fund, which is built up through the Social Security tax, is paid entirely by working people. Social security tax is rigged so that there's no tax on incomes over a certain amount. But that fund has built up, and as it builds up, it creates at least the legal possibility that the public sector can become a player in the

economy.

RC: Kerry talked a lot about jobs, he talked a lot about tax priorities, but he didn't say that much about poverty.

Piven: The entire tendency of the Democratic Party in the last 30 years, under the influence of the Democratic Leadership Council, which is pernicious, has been to move away from the issues of the 1960s, the issues through which the Democratic Party becomes the party of the down-and-outs, the marginals, immigrants, people of color, and women. So the argument has been that they have to get with mainstream America. I actually think that the American people are not so selfish and so evil that they would not respond to appeals to improve the conditions of the poor. All the survey data shows that they would. If you call it welfare, they shrink from it because welfare has been assaulted since the early 1970s. The program has been said to be the cause of every social problem in the world, without any evidence, to be sure, but the propaganda works. But if you ask people whether they think the poor should get a hand up, everybody agrees.

RC: It strikes me that the cultural wars are a way to unite people - often poor people - against a perceived liberal elite, and that it operates as a smoke screen around class and poverty.

Piven: And if the democrats won't do it, the social movements should. It's true that a lot of people are cultural traditionalists in the United States. A lot of people everywhere are cultural traditionalists. People have ideas that they learn when they were little about sex and gender and sin and stuff like that. If you keep talking about those ideas, those issues, and you don't talk about the problem of maintaining a standard of living, the problem of overwork, of too long hours, of not enough pay, of no health care - then you can lead people to fix their minds on the personal sin issues.

I actually think poverty - keeping people poor - is a sin. But, you know, a lot of Americans think sin is sexual

transgression. And if you succeed in encouraging people to obsess about that, you can distract them while you steal their wages. That's what's happening.

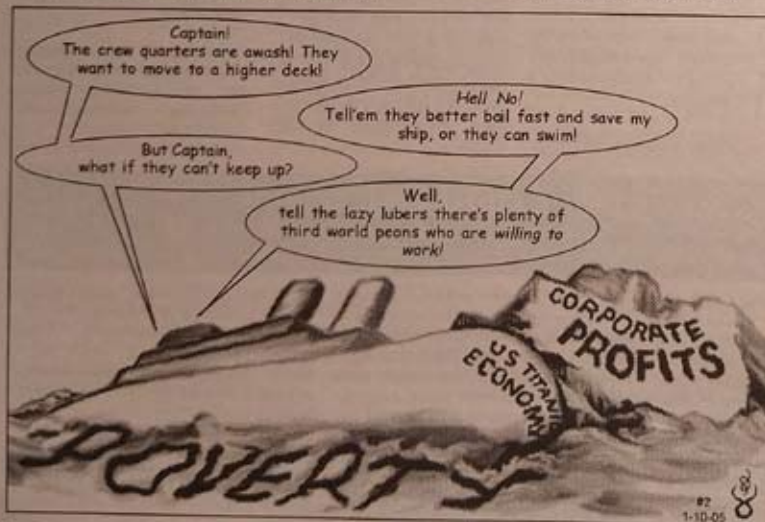
RC: There's been a lot of talk lately among progressives about recapturing the language of values. How do you rate that as a strategy for overcoming single-issue isolation?

Piven: Well, I don't know about that. I mean, what do they mean by it? If they mean that we should talk about sex too, I think it's crazy. If they mean we should advance our own ideals with moral conviction our ideals about equality, democracy, the elimination of poverty, more inclusive society - yes. Those are moral ideals. Those are values and we should be clear that they are values. It's not an economic agenda, it's a values agenda, but it's a different values agenda. It's a values agenda that a lot of the people who are talking values talk would respond to.

RC: Do progressives simply need to out-organize fundamentalists, or is there room for dialogue?

Piven: Grover Norquist, who runs a populist right coalition in Washington but now has links with such coalitions in the states, boasts that his coalition has moved evangelical Christians from being quasi-socialists to being free marketers. He's talking about the sense in which many evangelical Christians were big supporters of the New Deal. Why were they big supporters of the New Deal? Because they recognized that the New Deal gave them work relief. It gave them early food subsidies. It gave them the Works Progress Administration. These were things that made a lot of sense to them even though they were also evangelical Christians. And if Christ was an evangelical Christian, Christ also would have been in favor of relief, WPA, food subsidies, and so on.

RC: You've described the movement around George Bush as Authoritarian Populist, but there are aspects, such as the transfer of assets to industry, the rejection of reason, and the appeal to bigotry, that appear fascist. Why not just call it that?



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Plunder Continued

Piven: Well, do you know what I was trying to get at when I used that term? When we think about fascism, we think about political systems that exercise total surveillance and total control. I don't think that's likely to happen in the United States. And I don't think it has to happen for the plunder of the ruling class to continue. I think all they need to do is exercise rough control, and they'll allow you to publish your newspaper, me to make my talks and to teach my classes and write my books, but they will succeed in marginalizing us by whipping up a kind of popular passion around the personal values issues. That's where they're moving.

RC: In Poor People's Movements, you write about how social movements gain power in proportion to their ability to threaten and even stop business as usual. One of the things that was apparent to me in Seattle during WTO - and I've seen it growing around the country - is the militarization of policing. Do you think the political space still exists for noisy disruptive movements to occur?

Piven: Yeah, I certainly do. It's not fascism. The political space still exists. If you wanted to be

entirely safe without any cost, well, it never really is. There are risks associated with truly disruptive action. Sometimes high risks, but that has always been the case. And yet, people have undertaken such actions, they have gone to jail, and they've sometimes won.

RC: So, what else would you say to those who are wondering "What now?"

Piven: Well, it's gonna be a tough few years but I think only a few years. We cannot continue following these policies without creating domestic political crisis in the United States. And we should be ready for that crisis. We should be politically prepared, politically mobilized, straighten out our heads about what we believe in and what we want to correct in our own society, and we should understand that this is not only important for us, it's important for the entire world, because the United States has become a very dangerous power. People all over the world now agree that the greatest danger to world peace is the United States government.

Steaming Waters

by Teresa

Okay, let me see if I've got this straight. Sacramento City Councilman Robbie Waters is "steamed" because an unenforceable law is too expensive to prosecute.

Because he is my friend, Ron Stevens spoke to me right after the resolution of his illegal camping case. He told me that the judge declined to pursue the case because of the expense involved, and his income would mean zero dollars in court fees would be reimbursed. Ron would have ended up picking up trash at Loaves & Fishes in the event of a guilty verdict.

Does Mr. Waters not realize the 'soldiers' in the "War on Poverty" are the poverty stricken themselves? Most homeless in this country do more before sun-up every day just to stay alive than most indoor people do in an entire week. We make our beds every day, and then

attach them to back-packs weighing as much as 200 pounds. After that, the sky gets a little bit lighter so we walk several miles for morning coffee, carrying our packs all the way.

Then it's time to go to work. Yes, we do work. We towel down boats for donations. We recycle aluminum and plastic. Some work on bicycles. Some of us are artists and artisans.

One of the things I know beyond any shadow of reasonable doubt is that someone like Robbie Waters would not last a week doing what we do every day for years on end, even if he had one of our full paychecks at the start of the week. He would be broke within five days.

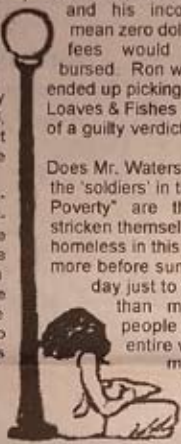
Because I do feel for the indoor 'citizens', I've been recommending to the homeless that they make an honest effort to get rid of their trash piles. I ask those I know to please put their trash in the abandoned refrigerators. I tell them that ruined clothing can be used as

makeshift garlands for the dumped Christmas trees we'll be finding in the park any time now.

While I realize that a 180° turn is impossible, is it too much to expect a little research into the problem? Maybe some truly workable solutions? The City Council could do so much good for the local economy and the homeless community all at the same time if they allow us to work at job we're good at. I do exterior detailing for \$30 an hour. I should not have to accept minimum wage.

I also cannot understand why people would pass laws that effectively create a minimum income level to legally live in this region, which is well above the required minimum wage. It does not make sense! I don't begrudge you your ivory tower... don't begrudge me my \$25 tent. I'll hide it from you, I promise.

One more thing, if you don't mind: The only steaming waters I want to hear about is my next hot bath.



WIN-WIN!

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low. So a bit before Thanksgiving 2004 when only a few points needed editing, housing advocates delivered uncooked turkeys to Supervisor Nottoli, insisting "Put this bird in the oven!", fearing that if they didn't vote on the ordinance before Christmas, the delay would result in having to vote with two new supervisors that might not have enough background to make a quick decision. Right before Christmas, they finalized the vote. It has been reported that this inclusionary ordinance is the only one in the United States that includes a provision for extremely low income. We need to thank the Board of Supervisors for this important vote, and thank the many individuals and organization that worked for this ordinance, and we need to thank the many developers who in the future will be building affordable housing for the poor.

Another victory, though not by a jury trial, was the court case of Ronald Stevens for camping (SEE "Steaming

Waters" by Teresa in this issue [above]). Attorney Kelly Tanalepy, who previously represented Billy McManus, used the necessity defense in Ronald's case. I don't know if any precedence was accomplished but Sacramento Superior Court Judge D. Robert Shuman is on record and was reported in the Sacramento Bee as stating, "We will society be served by conviction of the defendant of this crime? It is doubtful that the punishment would deter future conduct or actually punish the defendant" and "Temporary use of public property, such as parks and parkways is normally expected" Right on, Honorable Shuman!

And for all those humiliated by the unnecessary strip searches when going to jail for minor offenses, such as sleeping or drinking too much without a home, or for not doing anything wrong at all (proved later in court or by dismissal)—Attorney Mark Merin has successfully challenged that cruel and unusual practice, making an

average of \$1,000 available per offended jail guest. We should be hearing soon about awards.

I love a Parade! And I love even more that the Sacramento City Council rescinded the stupid parade ordinance they somehow secretly and very hurriedly passed in 2003, fearing that riotous anarchists would flock to the city to protest the USDA conference promoting genetically engineered agriculture. The ordinance they passed outlawed possessing any solid object, such as marbles, batteries, rocks. It outlawed sticks or poles wider than a specific dimension, that in effect outlawed most brass instruments (if they only thought out what their wording said). Gas masks, armor, rakes and shovels (what were the clowns going to clean the horse poop with?). In effect, outlawed were many everyday items that would allow police to arrest just about everyone attending. Of course, the Veterans and Memorial Day Parades would no longer be allowed due to

their weapons carrying. It was argued that there are already laws against causing damage and just about anything could be used as a weapon, including keys, but that doesn't mean anyone means to cause damage. San Francisco, protest central, doesn't have a parade ordinance — their law enforcers have training and experience. It was an infringement and a stifling of free speech, expression, creativity and assembly. Mayor Fargo attended a few parades since the inception of the ordinance, and found very many instances of illegality, innocent instances. The city council voted November 30 to rescind the ordinance (after 2 unsuccessful tries at rewording it). The City Council did say they would revisit the weapons prohibition portion of the ordinance, and protesters will revisit and continue their opposition to genetically engineered agriculture. And on it goes...

"All's well that ends better!"
- the Gaffer



...and I didn't have the money, so they ran me out of town from the East Coast to the West. Then I stowed away on this ship bound for Paradise, but they caught me and dropped me here ... You don't charge rent do you?



How do we get by these stray dogs? That's easy! Just throw them a bone --



--they'll fight over it, and leave us alone!



Caveat Emptor
OR
Where'd the money go?

FUNDING
I've thrown millions of dollars down here - why are there still homeless people?
It takes a lot of paper work to ensure that only those who truly qualify are funded!

REAL ESTATE
We can't have American citizens living in a room, the way it that costs a little more, well, a decent profit is the American way, isn't it?

PROGRAM AGENCIES
These people need a lot of experience to make sure they spend the money the way we want.

HOUSING
How'd you think we'd get by if you can't buy all that, you must be incompetent, because we've given you millions of dollars!



What the Voyager crew was really saying



A
Special Thanks
to
Richard &
Tina Wilks

for their
contribution

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Cups

by Michael Nettles

Teetering on rickety tables
Carelessly left misplaced and forgotten

The coffee cups

In the morning methodically stacked
In the afternoon scattered

Many never make it back

They come as sets
They come alone

Bearing solitary comment

Something that meant something
once to someone

Now, nothing at all

Cracked and filled with rain
Chipped or found in pieces

From where did they come.

Powerless in strangers' hands
We know how they all will end

Old City Cemetery

by Elizabeth Halloway

Dew sparkling in the Fall
on the place of death.
Sun kisses the earth,
raising living breath.
Our days are numbered.
How will we be remembered?

Somewhere someone is crying
over strangers who are dying.
Somewhere an angel's singing
over spirits that are winging.

Ancestors have been lost,
lying buried in the moss
where time is gently sighing
over facts of no denying.

Destiny is just a place
which all of us will come to face
and though our loving hearts have ceased,
honored, we will rest in peace.

Their trials have now come to an end.
We bless them as a precious friend.
And Spring will come in flowery fount.
Yes, they will know how much they count.

The New Year

by Mike Evans

They call it the New Year
not so much has changed;
no job for many, for some still no home
same stuff, just a bit rearranged;

As those that do make their New Years' resolutions,
they will do this, they will do that!
Never a clue as to what's the solution;
giving good tidings and joy to all with heartfelt good
cheer,

The birth of our Savior
should be celebrated all year!
But ass we look at our lives in 2005,
let us affect change and open our own eyes;

we cannot do what we've always done,
and expect things to get better fast,
the gift from God is for all not just one
change is due from top to bottom and from 1st to
last!

How long will we wait for the miracle,
and go on missing the blessing;
running day by day inside that same circle,
it is the love of each other that this piece
is addressing!

It doesn't take much to lend a hand
help your friend, neighbor,
brother or sister
get up and make a stand!

When two work together the load is light,
the plan has been in place a long time;
you all know that's right!
The problem is yours the problem is mine!

As we start this New Year with great expectations
remember the problem that is destroying our nation
hatred and greed throughout the land
we have ceased to reach out with a helping hand

Born to save us from condemnation
all of us from generation to generation
Save us from ourselves is what He was born to do
Save us! Yes save me and Yes! to save You!

Let's treat every day like it was Christmas as we
start the New Year
be kind to one another those who are far and near
Let's try something new this season of cheer
give a hand, and make a stand
loving each other while we are 'still here!'

*This piece is dedicated to the memory of
Dale DeWayne Roberson
May 17, 1959 to December 11, 2004
A good friend, a good heart...
He will be missed*

Obituary

Gene Bryant
d. 5/28/04
of pneumonia &
meningitis under Guy
West Bridge
Aged 43

**Gregory
Pippengar**

d. 9/28/04
of substance abuse
Aged 41

John Cravey

d. 10/5/04
of natural causes
Aged 60

**Randy
Robles**

d. 10/6/04
of pneumonia from
injury
Aged 45

**Jose
Valenzuela**

d. 12/4/04
of natural causes
Aged 50

**D. Dwayne
Roberson**

d. 12/11/04
of stab wounds
Aged 45

**Richard
Campbell**

d. 12/13/04
of cancer
Aged 60

**Vatarie
Horbatenko**

d. 12/24/04
of cancer
Aged 34

