



Workers of the World, Unite!

The MICHIGAN  
**socialist**

**Feature**

The promise, reality of  
the Kucinich campaign

page 8



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**Welcome to  
the police state**

# The MICHIGAN **socialist**

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The *Michigan Socialist* is the voice of the Socialist Party of Michigan (SPMI), affiliate of the Socialist Party USA. Party address: 909 Walwood Ct., No. 2, Kalamazoo, MI 49007; e-mail: [editor@mi-socialists.org](mailto:editor@mi-socialists.org); WWW: <http://news.mi-socialists.org>.

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## **Socialist Party USA: Outline of Principles**

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control: where working people own and control the means of production and distribution, through democratically-controlled committees and assemblies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible.

The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support union and electoral actions — independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system — to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions — radical and fundamental changes in the structure and nature of economic, political and social relations — to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control the economy and the government.

The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

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*This message brought to you by the staff of the Michigan Socialist*

## **letters**

Dear Editor:

I have come back late to the politics of the City of Detroit. In doing so, I read your article on Sister JoAnn Watson ("Detroit City Council elections: Nothing to smile about," May 2003).

As we are moving towards the time for preparation of electees for the city offices, as a progressive, I hope to be able to support Mrs. Watson as one of our most dynamic persons to perhaps fill more than just the council seat.

I would like to stay informed about the progressive movement in Detroit. At your leisure, please write me of organizations to get involved with. Thank you.

Gloria J. Lowe  
Detroit, Mich.

### **The Editor replies:**

We are glad that you found our article on JoAnn Watson helpful and informative. Since her election, JoAnn Watson has been, rather surprisingly, a strong and effective voice on the City Council.

Her recent efforts, for example, to bring the Detroit City Council into a coalition challenging the results of the Michigan Democratic Caucus appears to reflect a strong democratic and anti-racist impulse.

In this sense, her pre-election rhetoric and post-election actions have been rather consistent. That consistency is certainly a breath of fresh air in Detroit and Michigan

(and American!) politics.

While we Socialists certainly have our political differences with Ms. Watson, we also know that, as committed anti-racists and supporters of Detroit's "home rule," there are plenty of areas where we can work together.

In closing your letter, you ask about organizations to get involved with, in preparation for the upcoming elections and community activity.

Of course, we would invite you to explore the Socialist Party of Michigan, and particularly the Detroit Socialist Party, as one of those organizations.

There are also plenty of coalitions and groups that are involved in defending the rights of the residents of the City on various issues, including the Committee for the Political Resurrection of Detroit, the Keep The Vote No Takeover Coalition and the Sweetwater Alliance.

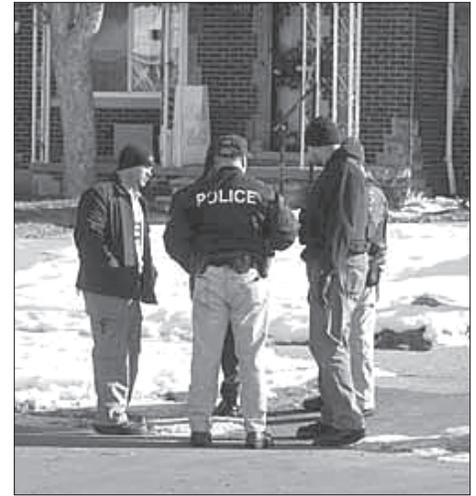
Another valuable resource for keeping up on events taking place, and coverage of those events from a progressive perspective, would be the weekly *Michigan Citizen*.

The *Citizen* calls itself "America's most progressive community newspaper."

While we cannot fully vouch for the accuracy of that statement, they certainly are Michigan's most progressive weekly newspaper, and a vital source of information.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

*Martin Schreder*



# Welcome to the police state

## Deaths of 2 Detroit cops spark more racist repression

By **MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

WHAT BEGAN AS what most people describe as a “tragic event” has become the basis for an all-out drive for racist repression and the imposition of a police state in Detroit.

In the early morning hours of February 16, 2004, two Detroit police officers, Matthew Bowens and Jennifer Fettig, were shot and killed on the southwest side of the City.

Within hours, Detroit police had arrested Eric Lee Marshall at his home on the northwest side. Marshall had been pulled

over by Bowens and Fettig, and was alleged to be the perpetrator of the crime.

Bowens and Fettig had been shot 22 times by a .40 caliber pistol — like many police departments use.

Bowens died at the scene; Fettig died of her wounds later that day.

BEYOND THESE FACTS, however, the story becomes a mix of confusing and illogical assertions.

When Marshall was arrested that morning, he was not hiding or taking any precautions that someone who had just shot two cops dead would.

In fact, he had been out shopping for dog food, and was returning from the store when police cornered him.

He did not run; he put down the dog food, raised his hands and reportedly said, “I know why you’re here; I didn’t do it.”

He has maintained his innocence consistently since.

As for the chain of evidence, there is much that is suspect.

For example, Detroit police are refusing to release the videotape from the squad car driven by Bowens and Fettig.

The videotape is important in this case, since there was a question of whether or not

## Little-league fascists deface Joe Louis monument

THE RACIST BACKLASH against Detroit, resulting from the deaths of the two cops on Feb. 16, took a decidedly ugly turn one week after the incident.

On Feb. 24, two little-league fascists snuck into the City and defaced the bronze monument commemorating the world-famous boxer, Joe Louis.

Louis, one of the greatest heavyweight boxers of all time and a well-known fighter against racism, grew up in Detroit and regarded it as his adoptive hometown.

The men, both from Superior Township in nearby Washtenaw County, used mops to smear gloss white paint all over the 24-foot long sculpture of Louis’ right arm, and



left the pictures of the two dead police officers at the scene.

On the back of the pictures, the two fascists wrote, “Courtesy of the Fighting Whites.”

Romulus police arrested the two men after a Detroit limousine driver spotted the two after committing the crime and followed them out of the City.

The driver called 911 and kept them informed of their movements.

One of the men charged for defacing the monument is Brett Cashman, a member of the Superior Township Parks Commission. When he was arrested, Cashman told the cops: “We did it for you guys.”

Both Cashman and his roommate, John Price, posted bond after being arraigned and are confined to house arrest by electronic tether.

*continued on page 13*

## lead article

their car was in front of or behind Marshall's pick-up truck.

As well, the videotape could answer the question of whether or not Marshall actually did the shooting.

After all, if the two cops followed procedure and parked behind his truck, and Marshall did get out of the vehicle with a gun, all of that should be visible on the dashboard camera, even if the actual shooting is not.

Also, police have not found the alleged murder weapon. At the same time, Bowens' service pistol — which is also a .40 caliber automatic — remains missing.

Initial reports after the shooting said there were two people in Marshall's truck. Shortly after arresting him, however, that story changed to a "single shooter."

But Marshall himself — or, more to the point, his history — is perhaps the most important element.

Apart from a relatively minor juvenile offense, Marshall had never been in trouble. He was studying to get his GED, and was looking to move to Arkansas with his sisters.

Moreover, according to his family, Mar-

shall never associated with any people who had a history of crime.

The cop mouthpiece, the *Detroit News*, reported that Marshall's brother, Aaron, said Marshall and a friend of his were going to set up a "spot" for dealing illicit drugs — implying that Marshall shot the two cops because he was a dealer.

However, no drugs seem to have been found either on Marshall, at his home or in his truck. If they had, that piece of information certainly would have been conveyed to the press and public by now.

ALL OF THIS raises the inevitable question: what really happened?

To be certain, the only people who can answer that are Bowens and Fettig (both of whom are now dead), and Marshall (currently in jail, and not talking).

Nevertheless, even with all these inconsistencies, an all-out drive for greater repression and attacks on the City has begun.

Ever since the shootings, Detroit police have been working 12-hour shifts, resulting in a 50-percent increase of police presence in the City.

Let me rephrase that: a 50-percent-plus

police presence *patrolling the border between the City and the suburbs.*

This placement of police patrols only reinforces what many already know: the suburban areas demanded the increased police presence, so their "interests" would be better protected.

The increased patrols by Detroit police have been matched by similar actions by suburban departments, resulting in the City's residents being surrounded by a wall of heavily armed, trigger-happy (and violently racist) cops.

Within the City, the police have been lining up all sorts of public figures to make appeals to "change the culture of violence."

Such calls are meant to do little more than warm the hearts of "liberal" racists in the City and suburbs; they are not meant to save even one single life. The relatively "liberal" *Detroit Free Press* made this point in its Feb. 18 editorial.

While it correctly pointed out the ties between economic crisis and crime, it went on to make a cheap appeal to "change the culture" while refusing to be critical of the local and state governments for letting the

*continued on page 12*

## A 'democratic' outburst in a sea of repression

THE DISENFRANCHISING of African Americans happens not only at the ballot box in Detroit.

A recent ruling by Judge Deborah Thomas blasted the Wayne County Circuit Court for systematically excluding Black jurors.

Thomas, a judge in the Circuit Court, issued her ruling in response to a complaint by two African American men facing trial.

The two petitioners argued that they were not being tried by a jury of their peers, because most of those jurors were white.

In an angry five-page opinion, Judge Thomas wrote: "the failure of the Wayne County Jury Services Department to collect information from individuals ... as to their race and ethnic background works as a direct infringement" of their rights.

While Thomas' order does not change the jury selection process, it does mandate that the Jury Services Dept. begin recording the race and ethnicity of jurors, thus making it possible to track instances of exclusion.

As well, it is uncertain that her order will even be implemented.

Wayne Circuit Chief Judge Mary Beth Kelly, who oversees the Jury Services Dept., says she will respond to Thomas' opinion after the trial of the two petitioners concludes.

According to a report in one of the Detroit dailies, "about 41 percent of the eligible Wayne Circuit Court jury pool is from Detroit, yet only 28 percent of the actual pool is from Detroit."

"Since 80 percent of Detroit residents are black, there are a disproportionate number of whites on juries."

This systematic disenfranchisement of African Americans in the court system should not come as a surprise to those who are familiar with what has happened to Detroit over the last decade.

When the Republican-led state government moved to abolish the Detroit Recorder's Court in 1997, many in Detroit raised the issue that this would lead to white juries trying Black defendants.

But then, that was exactly what the Michigan Republicans, partially owned by the prison industry, wanted.

With all the money that the Michigan GOP gets from prison industry suppliers, as well as from corporations that use and contract prison labor, it should not be a surprise to anyone that they would want a larger prison population.

Cheap labor is cheap labor, after all.

But now, with the state close to \$1 billion in debt and not so much money to fund their pet prisons, there is a move to thin out the prison population.

The recent talk about the death penalty and "early releases" for low-level offenders are two different tactics to achieve the same end — the shifting of segments of prison labor over to the "reserve army" of unemployed "surplus population."

In this sense, the move toward trying to restore a little judicial equality can be seen as a "liberal" alternative to the recent proposals of their "conservative" allies. ★

*Martin Schreuder*

# Jim Crow gets married

## Gay marriage rights struggle comes out

By **MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

THERE ARE MOMENTS in history when a single act defines an entire struggle.

In the 1930s, the Flint, Mich., sit-down strike defined the rising militant labor movement.

In the 1950s, the Montgomery, Ala., Bus Boycott and President Eisenhower's sending of troops to integrate the schools of Little Rock, Ark., defined the developing Civil Rights Movement.

Today, the movement for gay and lesbian democratic rights has been defined by two little words: "I do."

On Feb. 12, the Democratic mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, directed city officials to allow gay and lesbian couples the right to obtain marriage licenses.

In doing so, Newsom and the City of San Francisco became the epicenter of a nationwide movement to expand the rights of same-sex couples and the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community generally.

As of the end of February, close to 7,000 same-sex couples purchased licenses and stood for a civil ceremony.

The first couple to receive a license and be married were Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, the co-founders of the first lesbian organization in the U.S., the Daughters of Bilitis.

Lyon and Martin had been together for 51 years.

Hundreds of city workers volunteered their time to keep city offices open, as thousands of couples from across the country converged on the "City by the Bay."

At the same time, though, the storm clouds of rightwing backlash and repression began to gather.

WITHIN DAYS OF Newsom opening the doors to democracy, leading figures of both the Republican and Democratic parties emerged to voice their opposition.

By far, and to no one's surprise, the most disgusting reactions came from Republican politicians, including members of Congress

**Above: A couple kiss outside San Francisco City Hall during a protest in support of the right of gays and lesbians to obtain marriage licenses. Below: Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, founders of the first lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, are congratulated after being the first couple to obtain a marriage license in San Francisco.**



and California's *fürher*, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who claimed that Newsom's decision violated a "defense of marriage" law enacted by the state legislature.

Even George W. Bush got into the act, appealing to his far-right and fascist supporters by openly backing the passage of an amendment to the Constitution defining marriage in heterosexual and religious terms.

Leaders of the Democratic Party, including the current front-runner for the party's presidential nomination, John Kerry, joined with the Bush regime and the Republicans in opposing the democratic rights of gay and lesbian couples.

However, instead of outright opposition to the right to marry, the Democrats have come out in favor of the "separate but equal" scheme of civil unions.

Civil unions are often held up as an "al-

ternative" to marriage.

But, in fact, the authorization of civil unions alongside marriage would be little more than the creation of a second-class status for same-sex couples.

Unlike in the case of marriage licenses, states would not be required to recognize civil union certificates, which would mean that couples would gain and lose their rights as they traveled from place to place.

A LOT OF CONFUSION has surrounded the legality of same-sex marriage. For the most part, all sides — even the more radical and revolutionary advocates — have been willing to concede the legal ground to the Right.

Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says, "all persons born or naturalized in the United States

*continued on page 13*

## War, crimes and videotape:

# 'He's wounded; hit 'em!'

By **L. MEYERS**

*The Michigan Socialist*

IT IS NOT EVERY day that a small piece of videotape footage can so outrage you that you are moved beyond words.

But, that is exactly the way this writer felt after reviewing a video that has been circulating around the Internet for over a month.

The video is the night-vision camera from a U.S. Apache helicopter crew currently operating as part of the occupation of Iraq.

On the video, you can clearly see the Apache helicopter crew engage and kill a number of Iraqi people, and destroy a few vehicles in the process.

At one point on the tape, after killing two of the Iraqis and blowing up their vehicles, the camera pans to the right.

After a brief moment of talk about whether anyone else is still alive, they see a slight motion and open fire on a man hiding behind a large delivery truck.

The truck bursts into flames, seemingly killing the cowering man.

After a few more seconds of watching the

situation, the man who had been hiding falls over and into the view of the Apache crew's camera.

In a clear and distinct voice, one of the crew says, "roger, he's wounded." The word comes back: "Hit 'em!" The Apache opens fire, killing the wounded man.

CERTAINLY, stories of war crimes coming out of Iraq are becoming more common — except in the "free" American media.

Reports of U.S. and British soldiers firing on unarmed civilians, forcing Iraqis to risk their lives for the pleasure of the occupiers, torturing Iraqi "suspects," raping and humiliating Iraqi women, etc., are circulating around the world.

But this videotape footage takes the issue to another level. It is one thing to hear reports cannot be immediately substantiated; it is another thing to watch a war crime take place live.

Article Three of the IV Geneva Convention (adopted in 1949) prohibits a military force from knowingly firing on wounded combatants, whether they are actual soldiers of a government, or guerrillas operat-

ing as irregular troops.

By international treaty, wounded combatants "shall in all circumstances be treated humanely," and "the wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for," either by the military itself or by a third party, like the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As this videotape shows, however, the U.S. occupation forces are being told to violate the Geneva Conventions — which is considered to be a war crime.

While we cannot necessarily hold the individual soldier accountable for the commission of such crimes, we also cannot excuse them.

The Nuremberg Trials after the Second World War made clear that saying "we were just following orders" is not a legitimate defense when charged with war crimes.

We can only hope that this Apache crew, and their fellow Army air cavalrymen serving in Iraq and other places, has plenty of time to study and better understand what happened at Nuremberg ... as they await court martial for violating the Geneva convention. ★

## U.S. stages 'regime change' in Haiti

AS WE GO TO press, we have learned that the Bush regime has succeeded in staging another "regime change," this time in Haiti.

The regime and its media mouthpieces have presented this coup d'état as a case where the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was forced to resign and flee the country due to popular resistance.

The truth, however, is far different.

According to eyewitnesses, at 5:30 a.m., Sunday, Feb. 29, 2004, members of a U.S. Marine Corps detachment kidnapped Aristide and held him "incommunicado" until he signed a statement of resignation.

This act of "regime change" by the U.S. was done with the full complicity of the other Great Powers, most notably France — which had gained an undeserved reputation during the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq.

Within hours of Aristide's abduction, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution sanctioning the removal of the elected Haitian government and authorizing a multinational force headed by the U.S.

There is little doubt that this act of "regime change" is meant to close the book on the decade-long attempt at solidifying a democratic republic in the Caribbean country.

It was only 10 years ago that then-President Bill Clinton sent soldiers to Haiti to aid in the transition from the rightwing regime of "Baby Doc" Duvalier and install Aristide.

Under the Bush regime, Aristide is a liability to the plan to make the world safe for Halliburton and Bechtel, so the remaining elements of the Duvalier dictatorship have been reborn as the "Democratic Convergence."

As the saying goes, one person's terrorist is

another person's freedom fighter.

Below is an initial statement adopted by the State Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Michigan. Be sure to check out the next issue of the Michigan Socialist for more information on this unfolding event.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Michigan condemns in the strongest way the Bush Administration's collaboration with right-wing death squads to carry out "regime change" against the popularly elected government of Haiti. We call upon all working-class, left and progressive organizations to join with us in protesting against Bush's decision to send the Marines to Haiti, and in demanding that all American troops stationed outside of U.S. borders be brought home alive without delay. ★

# Small struggles; large lessons

Notes on the contract struggle at Parsec, Inc. — Part One

By **MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

1. I HAVE ALWAYS been a believer in the old saying that large things come in small packages. From my experiences, this is as true for lessons in the class struggle as it is for anything else.

Sometimes the small struggles and battles that sections of the working class engage in are the best schools for education and drawing out important lessons. They can sometimes provide a “hot house” environment for drawing out important principles and methods that can, with obvious modification, be applied to larger struggles. In this sense, these small struggles become dress rehearsals for the greater battles to come.

This was the case with the recent contract struggle at my job. I work for Parsec, Inc., a subcontractor for railroad companies like CSX, Canadian Pacific and Norfolk Southern. The yard where I work has a small workforce (about 20 unionized workers and a few non-union mechanics) and a predominantly African American composition with a significant presence of women.

2. OUR LAST CONTRACT was a four-year deal, and a complete sellout. For that time, we did not receive raises. Instead, we were given an annual bonus “in lieu of raises.” The benefits were decent, but did not have dental or vision coverage (the latter being a must for workers forced to use computers). Some of the contract language sounded impressive, but the Union did little or nothing to stand up to the management and enforce it.

When it came time to negotiate a new contract, some of the workers who had been through the last round had become cynical and did not think much could be gained. On the other hand, some of the newer workers had never been through the experience of contract negotiations and were inclined to trust the Union bureaucrats.

It was between these two groups that a core of militants began to cohere around a basic platform of membership control and



Issues of *The Organizer*, the newsletter of the Workers Democracy Caucus, a membership-based organization inside the National Production Workers Union, Local 707. For more information on the WDC, contact the author via the *Michigan Socialist*.

workers’ democracy. In fact, the group took the name, “Workers Democracy Caucus,” to emphasize that fact.

The experience of the WDC provided the first lesson: the importance of an organized opposition. Even though the WDC was a small caucus, its organized presence changed the framework of the discussion that had been taking place (which was little more than a replay of previous contract negotiations).

(For those interested in learning more about the WDC, please contact the author via the *Michigan Socialist*.)

3. EVEN THOUGH OUR contract expired in mid-December, contract negotiations did not begin until after the New Year. In the meantime, my co-workers found themselves facing the Christmas season with little means to give their children a happy holiday. To make matters worse, it was about the same time that we all learned that, if there was to be a strike, the Union could not even begin to make up for the financial hit most of us would take.

This led the WDC to approach the Socialist Party of Michigan for assistance. Thus, the Workers’ Defense Fund was established. It was the WDF and the SPMI that made it possible for my co-workers to give their kids a good Christmas. In addition, the WDF became the nerve center for building support among other unions, collecting money and goods that could be used to provide for workers during a strike.

This experience provided a second important lesson: organizing cannot be confined to a single arena or separate from non-

workplace/community activity. If the WDC had not sought to support our brothers and sisters outside of the job, or had not begun to build support in the community and the working class in general, it is doubtful we could have been as moderately successful as we were.

4. WHEN IT CAME time to discuss and finally vote on the contract, it was a surprisingly open and democratic discussion — even if the arguments of the Union bureaucracy at times sunk to the lowest levels, including threats against members of the WDC by the bureaucrats and management.

The first vote by the membership on the contract was historic. For the first time in its 17-year history, the membership voted down a proposed contract and sent it back for continued negotiation. The membership had listened to and read the arguments, and voted according to their beliefs.

The week after the vote was a real rollercoaster. There was not a day during that week when I did not receive a phone call from the CEO of Parsec, Inc., either pleading with or threatening me (sometimes in the same breath). The Union officials were no different, alternating between threats and appeals for workers to approve the contract.

Ultimately, the membership decided to accept the deal, with the understanding that WDC members would maintain their opposition stance. The reason was that it was mutually understood that more organization and preparation were needed to take on all the forces aligned against us (which included the Big Three automakers).

*continued on page 15*

# A 'workers' White House?'

## The promise and reality of the Kucinich campaign

By **BEN BURGIS**

*The Michigan Socialist*

AS SOCIALISTS, we argue that politicians representing the political machines of the business owning classes can never be relied on to carry out the interests of working people.

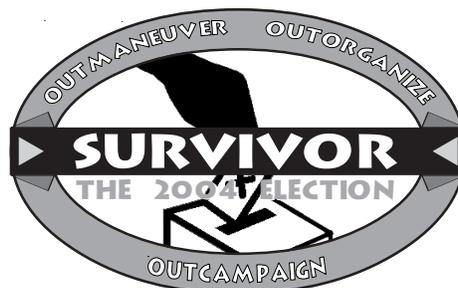
Rather than supporting the "less evil" Democrats over the "more evil" Republicans, we try to build an independent working-class alternative to fight for a better society.

After all, the Democratic and Republican parties are joined at the wallet to a common agenda, within the bounds of which only very limited disagreements over secondary questions are every really tolerated.

That is to say, for example (to pick the difference most frequently cited by supporters of lesser evil politics), that the debates within and between the two major parties sometimes cover the rather limited question of whether or not women should be given the "choice" between aborting fetuses before they develop into children they can't afford to raise or raising them in poverty.

However, no mainstream Democrat or Republican wants to give women a real choice by providing both free abortions on demand, as part of a system of universal health care, and, on the other hand, massive publicly-funded child support so that poor women who choose to have children can do so without further impoverishing themselves.

The debates within and between these two parties rarely touch on the basic shared premises of empire abroad, economic austerity at home and a systematic prioritiza-



tion of corporate profits over the human needs and democratic rights of the majority of the populace in all spheres.

From this perspective, the presidential campaign of Congressman Dennis Kucinich is an extremely interesting development.

Kucinich talks about removing the United States from NAFTA, GATT and the WTO.

He calls for an end to the American occupation of Iraq, and openly acknowledges that the primary interest of the U.S. in Iraq is in Iraq's primary export, a fluid black substance whose name has three letters in it.

He argues that if the provide sector is unable to provide full employment, then the federal government has a moral duty to do so through massive public works programs.

He believes that the living wage should be the national minimum wage, and he says that as President he will issue executive orders preventing heavy-industry manufacturers from re-locating factories from the United States to the third world on "national security" grounds.

Emphasizing his plans to use presidential power in this benevolent sort of way, the congressman's campaign materials often say that, under a Kucinich administration, we would have what he calls a "workers'

White House."

Needless to say, none of these positions are music to the ears of corporate America.

Doubtless, many independent left-wingers who supported Kucinich's friend and fellow progressive-populist Ralph Nader in 2000 have put their hopes in the Kucinich campaign as a way to aggressively push their agenda within the "rules of the game," so as not to risk another four years of George W. Bush.

While some doctrinaire radicals might say that he's "really not that different" from the traditional two-party consensus outlook, as a matter of basic honesty we should admit that (unlike John Kerry, for example) he is not just "Bush-Lite."

Were he to become the Democratic nominee, the country would see a presidential race revolving around a sharp clash of policy programs to a greater extent than has been the case in living memory.

Does this mean that Socialists should be supporting the Kucinich campaign?

IN ORDER TO answer that question, we need to look very closely at two things.

First of all, what is Kucinich's exact political outlook? What differentiates his politics from ours, and how important are these differences?

Secondly, what is his role within the Democratic Party? How does his presidential bid fit in with any kind of larger strategy for bringing about social change?

The first important point to be made about his political perspective — which is the same basic progressive-populist worldview which is also, for example, the dominant political perspective within the Green

## feature

Party — is that this perspective leads its adherence to share at least some of the same short-term goals that socialists advocate.

Certainly, we agree with him that every one has a right to a job with a living wage, that health care should be provided free to every one as a matter of basic human rights and that “free trade” agreements that hand over power from people’s elected representatives to unelected an unaccountable corporate monstrosities like “WTO trade judges” are unacceptable.

On the foreign policy front, it is true that Rep. Kucinich’s stances are sometimes confused and inconsistent.

For example, he voted in favor of the post-September 11 “blank check” resolution to allow the President to respond militarily in any way he deemed fit to the Sept. 11 atrocities.

He has since denounced President Bush’s massive bombing campaign against civilian targets in Afghanistan.

If Kucinich truly thought that this would not be part of the way that President Bush utilized the resolution that he voted for, at best this reflected a dangerous level of naïveté about the way that the world works.

Similarly, while his persistent opposition both to the original invasion of Iraq and to the continued presence of American troops there is certainly admirable — as is honesty about the economic motives underlying the war — his “UN in, U.S. out” plan ignores vital points about the way the world works.

The fact is that the UN has never been anything but a convenient tool for the



**A very young Dennis Kucinich (right) talking with his father, a Teamster truck driver in Cleveland. Kucinich’s working-class background is the basis for much of his talk about a “workers’ White House.” Unfortunately, all that talk means nothing as long as he continues to serve the capitalist class.**

machinations of great powers and that in the past “UN-led” military adventures (e.g., Korea) have been as vicious as “U.S.-led” versions (e.g., Vietnam).

Indeed, the UN has already been a target of the Iraqi resistance, and it is not hard to see why — by the UN’s own estimates, well over 1 million Iraqis, disproportionately children, died as a direct result of U.S.-backed “UN sanctions” between the first and second Gulf Wars.

Still, at the end of the day, it must be admitted that he is more or less the only Democratic candidate whose policy positions point — in however confused and inconsistent a manner — in the direction of

folding up the U.S. empire and bringing home the vast legions of troops dispatched all over the world to police that empire.

So there is a large agreement between the stance of the Socialist Party and the stance of Kucinich’s supporters on that issue as well.

THAT SAID, there is a very real sense in which none of Rep. Kucinich’s reform proposals go far enough.

Under capitalism, most of the decision-making structure is not up for election, and the deeply undemocratic socio-economic power structures at the base of American society would still be in place under a Kucinich administration.

Most of us would still be forced to rent ourselves out to an employer as wage slaves in order to make a living, and we would continue to have little to no democratic control over most spheres of society.

Most real power would still be concentrated in a very small slice of the population — wealthy stockholders, CEOs and so forth — that would continue to live off of the sweat of others.

Similarly, the terms of political debate would continue to be set by a tiny handful of media barons who share the worldview of their fellow corporate oligarchs.

We are, after all, living in a country where every single privately owned cable channel is owned by one of four mega-cor-



**Dennis Kucinich, in his early years, outlining his agenda for bringing civilization to Washington. (Just kidding about the meaning. Honestly, we really don’t know the story behind this picture, but it comes from his Congressional website — [www.house.gov/kucinich](http://www.house.gov/kucinich).)**



**Kucinich has put a lot of effort into winning over the votes of unionized workers by attending Union meetings and walking picket lines. We wonder what he would do if faced with a strike being broken by a Democratic administration.**

porations (indeed, if buyout plans already in the works go through, the number may be reduced to three by the time this article goes to print) and the situation in radio and print media is not much better.

Similarly, the mechanisms of political power were designed to serve the interests of that segment of the population, and have deeply undemocratic aspects encoded within them.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution explicitly believed that “while the people are the only source of political legitimacy, they should not be allowed to govern.”

This is why they put in place all kinds of mechanisms — the separation between the legislative and executive branches, “judicial review,” long presidential terms, an electoral college, etc. — to shield the wise men who know what’s best for the people (chiefly “men of property” because they have a “stake in society”) from the “passing whims” of the “ignorant” masses.

None of this will change under a Kucinich administration, because the congressman’s most ambitious plans do not go beyond “legal” legislative reformism within the bounds of the current social, political and economic system. In other words, rhetoric aside, it will still be *their* White House, not *ours*.

So if (at least for those who care about democracy) the progressive-populist vision espoused by politicians like Kucinich and Nader does not go far enough, there is also

a troubling sense in which it goes too far.

Ironically, Kucinich’s own political history is a perfect illustration of this problem.

BACK IN 1978, when Kucinich was the mayor of Cleveland, the city’s banks demanded that he sell Cleveland’s municipally owned electricity system, Munny Light, to its privately-owned competitor, in which those same banks had a financial interest.

Mayor Kucinich stuck to his progressive principles and refused, causing the banks to retaliate viciously, defaulting on the city’s credit and plunging Cleveland into a massive financial crisis.

In the misery resulting from this, Kucinich went down to a devastating defeat in the next election.

Fast forward to the year 2003, when presidential candidate Kucinich was interviewed in *Rolling Stone*.

The interviewer brought up the battle over Munny Light, and quite reasonably asked the candidate why he thought he would get away with his reform plans as president.

Wouldn’t corporate America in general fight back just as viciously against such reforms as full employment at a living wage, which would, after all, devastate the bargaining power of companies with regard to their employees, as the banks of Cleveland fought back against his disobedience to their privatization scheme?

What made him think that financial in-

terests adversely affected by Kucinich’s program would fail to break his Presidency as ruthlessly as they broke his Mayoralty?

This is a damn good question for any one who knows a little 20th-century history.

The last several decades have been littered with the bodies of the followers of reformists elected leaders in such places as Guatemala and Chile who tried to govern in a way that displeased the United Fruit Company and other American corporations.

Some of the most brutal dictatorships in the third world — such as the Suharto regime in Indonesia, which carried out in proportional terms the largest genocide since Hitler’s extermination of European Jews — have been installed by Washington in order to prevent the plans of elected governments to redistribute wealth.

Nor is this a matter of bad old “Cold War excesses.” As recently as June 2002, the State Department encouraged Venezuelan military officers who briefly overthrew that country’s elected president, the left-populist Hugo Chavez, and installed the head of Fedecamaras (the Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce) as the new “president.”

While the Bush administration has tried to deny their fairly clear role in instigating the coup, what they cannot deny is that within hours of Chavez being put under house arrest, they publicly recognized the coup-plotters as “the legitimate government of Venezuela.”

Nor is this pattern confined to the “third world.” Back in the 1930s, the fascist regimes of continental Europe were openly backed by local business elites because (quite explicitly) of a morbid fear of “Communist revolution.”

The fact is that for the capitalist class, an empty shell of democracy is a good way to preserve the legitimacy of their rule and make sure things runs smoothly, but when any one tries to use democratic processes to threaten their privileges, then “democracy” is a luxury they can no longer afford.

So the question asked by the *Rolling Stone* interviewer really was a very good question.

CONGRESSMAN Kucinich, unfortunately, did not have a good answer. He rather lamely replied that the President has more power than a local mayor and left it at that.

This is just not good enough, and it points to a central failing of the progressive-populist worldview.

Its adherents talk about “the people” as if it were simply an undifferentiated whole and every one had the same interests.

The fact is that class divisions and class struggle is a fact of life in this sort of society. Not all of us have the same interests, and the illusion of common membership in something called “the American people” can blind us to this in dangerous ways.

The overwhelming majority of the population is part of the working class. Socialists don’t define “the working class” as merely those who are “culturally working-class” or work in traditional “heavy industry” jobs or as the relatively more poorly paid categories of workers.

Rather, it is a term that encompasses all of us who are forced to rent ourselves out to an employer. The fundamental conflict of interests between workers and the capitalist class of owners creates a struggle that goes on whether our side is aware of it or not.

Labor creates all wealth, but those who labor only receive in wages whatever part of the product of their labor is not stolen by the ruling class that owns the economic enterprises in which we work and that lives off of our sweat.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a mass-based radical industrial union (which was since wiped out by massive government repression during and after the First World

War) was founded.

In the preamble to its constitution, the Industrial Workers of the World (or “Wobblies”) declared that the “working class and the employing class have nothing in common.... Between these two classes, a struggle must go on until the workers organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, [and] abolish the wage system.”

This was true then, and it remains true now.

IN ORDER TO actually carry out the progressive social changes that Kucinich’s supporters want, legislative decisions and executive orders are not enough.

They would have to be backed up by decisive action from below — strikes, workplace occupations, mass civil disobedience, soldiers refusing orders to fire on crowds, etc. — to have any chance of being translated into reality.

Recognizing this reality means overcoming populism in favor of democratic socialism, recognizing the existence and importance of the class struggle — which means that the movement should not stop at “capitalism with a human face,” but must abolish the existence of classes through a working-class victory in the class struggle.

This means that we should aggressively fight for a decentralized, participatory system of democratic socialism.

The private ownership of economic enterprises should be abolished in favor of a system of real democracy in all spheres of life. Ordinary people should be able to democratically control their own workplaces and communities.

Any decisions that can’t be made in the most participatory way possible at the local level can be made by assemblies of delegates fully accountable to their constituents and instantly recallable by those constituents at any time and for any reason.

The sort of “democracy” that the founding fathers have in mind should be swept away in favor a full-bodied democracy where the so-called “ignorant masses” actually call the shots.

Of course, despite these major differences between Kucinich’s politics and ours, a case could perhaps be made for giving critical support to the congressman from Ohio’s presidential bid, helping to elect him to

power while aggressively arguing for the kinds of measures that it would really take to implement his program.

This sort of case could be made, that is to say, if he were running as an independent or a third party candidate.

The problem is that he is “playing by the rules” of a political machine (the Democratic Party) that is financially, ideologically and structurally inseparable from corporate America.

It is a foregone conclusion that he will not receive that party’s nomination.

Despite this, he has said again and again that he is a loyal Democrat and that he will endorse whatever candidate receives his party’s nomination.

That means that by this summer he will almost certainly be campaigning for Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, a man who voted for NAFTA, voted for the USA-PATRIOT Act, voted to authorize Bush to invade Iraq, helped spread Bush’s lies about “weapons of mass destruction” and while he now says (talk is cheap) that the invasion was a mistake, he also says that, as president, he will keep American troops in Iraq to continue the “battle against terrorism.”

On the home front, Kerry preaches the market-fundamentalist line that the government has “no right” to prevent manufacturers from shutting down factories in the United States, and merely hopes to convince Congress to reward companies that stay here with tax breaks — which would shift the tax burden even further onto the shoulders of working people.

In other words, by this summer at the latest, Kucinich will be campaigning to replace Bush with “Bush-Lite.”

SO WHY RUN? Kucinich could be quite sincere, and truly think that he is advancing his agenda. The problem is that, in the greater scheme of things, his subjective intentions are not that important.

His objective role is too woo angry, discontented elements — unionists, leftists and progressive activists disenchanted with the Democratic Party’s pro-corporate agenda to the point where they might consider voting third-party — back into the fold.

Kucinich offers the discontented an illusion that positive social change can be

*continued on page 14*

# lead article

## Police state

continued from page 4

capitalists loot the state treasury.

Meanwhile, attacks against the City and its residents escalate.

Incidents of racist attacks by suburban whites have increased throughout the metropolitan region, with residents of Detroit being regularly harassed and intimidated wherever they go.

Several African American residents of Detroit have told the *Michigan Socialist* that they have been harassed at suburban malls and shopping centers, including being followed by suburban police until they reach the City-suburb border.

This harassment and intimidation reached a peak with the defacing of the bronze Joe Louis monument in downtown Detroit by a pair of little-league fascists from the suburbs. (See article, this issue.)

ON TOP OF ALL this, there has now begun a push by certain elements within the two major parties to allow the death penalty in Michigan.



The Michigan driver's license photo of Eric Marshall, the man accused of killing two Detroit cops.

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, in a typical show of subservience to the Right, has supported a proposal by State Rep. Larry Julian (R-Lennon) to amend the state constitution to allow the death penalty.

They are given a platform by the two major Detroit dailies, even though both have editorialized against the proposal (though the *News* is less enthusiastic about opposing it).

There is little doubt that the City government, and especially Kilpatrick, would like to see a swift trial that ends with Marshall behind bars for the rest of his life.

With Detroit hosting the Super Bowl in 2006, Kilpatrick would like nothing more than to present himself as the man who "cleaned up the City."

We can only figure that is one of the reasons why the Wayne County Circuit Court has been systematically excluding African Americans from juries, leading to a near-explosion of the prison population in the area. (See article, this issue.)

LIKE ALL OTHER residents of the City, Socialists are just as concerned about the problems of crime. After all, our goal is to build a new society, and that means dealing honestly with issues like this.

However, our approach to such issues is fundamentally different from those we see undertaken by the capitalists, its armed enforcers, "justice" system and its two political parties.

We Socialists understand that the root of crime and associated violence is the capitalist system itself, primarily its treatment of working people as commodities or "surplus population."

Nobody steals because they can; nobody kills because they enjoy it. Human beings are forced to take such drastic measures as a way to survive in a society driven by exploitation and oppression.

For Socialists, the solution to crime is

## Why is there no death penalty in Michigan?

OVER THE LAST few years, and especially recently, there has been a lot of talk in the media and among capitalist politicians to bring the death penalty to Michigan.

In the wake of the deaths of the two Detroit police officers, the talk has become more of a hysterical scream.

But it is worth noting that it is necessary to say "bring the death penalty to Michigan" in an article such as this, instead of "bring back the death penalty."

Why?

Michigan has an honorable and remarkable distinction: it was the first English-speaking state to abolish the death penalty.

In fact, the State of Michigan constitutionally prohibits the death penalty, and has since 1847.

What caused the State of Michigan to forever abolish the death penalty? Two early cases provide the answer.

In 1828, Patrick Fitzpatrick, a resident of Detroit, was living for a time at an inn across the river in Sandwich (now Wind-

sor), Ontario.

One day, the daughter of the innkeeper was found raped and murdered. Fitzpatrick was arrested and accused of committing the crime.

After a brief trial, and based on circumstantial evidence, Fitzpatrick was found guilty and shortly thereafter hanged.

Seven years later, Fitzpatrick's former roommate at the inn in Sandwich lay on his deathbed.

Wanting to clear his conscience before dying, he confessed to raping and killing the innkeeper's daughter.

The residents of Detroit and the rest of Michigan were enraged at the idea that an innocent man was executed. But this rage was not isolated to one case.

Two years after Fitzpatrick was executed, Stephen Simmons was put on trial and convicted of killing his pregnant wife while in a drunken rage.

The local sheriff, hastily appointed after his predecessor resigned (because he did not

believe that Simmons should be executed), made the execution into a gala event.

The execution took on the air of a carnival, with bleachers built around the execution site (where the Downtown Branch of the Detroit Public Library sits today), formal invitations issued, hotels and inns filled to capacity, brass bands, and local merchants hawking their wares.

As Simmons stood on the gallows, the rope around his neck, the sheriff asked him if he had any last words.

Those words echo today:

*Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive;*

*Let a repenting rebel live.*

*Are not Thy mercies full and free?*

*May not a sinner trust in Thee?*

*My crimes are great, but can't surpass*

*The power and glory of Thy grace.*

*Great God, Thy nature hath no bound,*

*So, let Thy pardoning love be found.*

Simmons died before the last echoes of

found in the building of a new political, economic and social system that values human beings and gives them real access to a better life.

Beginning with the expansion of democracy, not only in politics but also in the managing of the economy, and cultural and social relations, a Socialist government administering a democratic workers' republic would work to eliminate the material basis for social inequality and the crime that stems from it.

This is the kind of system the Socialist Party of Michigan will be promoting during the 2004 electoral campaign.

In the meantime, however, we must deal with the situation that immediately confronts us.

That means not only mobilizing to oppose any attempts to bring the death penalty to Michigan, but also to organize working people to be on the watch and prepared for elements looking to "avenge" the deaths of Bowens and Fettig — whether they wear civilian clothes or a police uniform.

Finally, all working people should keep a close eye on the trial of Eric Marshall, to watch and make sure he is not railroaded by the combined power of the cops, courts and government. ★

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this poem did.

The audience was stunned and deeply moved by Simmons' appeal to the heavens. One witness called the execution both "cruel and vindictive."

The result of these two cases was a near-universal rejection of the death penalty among the citizens of Michigan.

Thus, when the state constitution was being rewritten in the spring of 1846, delegates to the convention included a constitutional abolition of capital punishment.

On March 1, 1847, the new constitution went into effect ... and into the pages of history.

Today, March 1 is celebrated around the world as International Death Penalty Abolition Day, marking the anniversary of the implementation of the 1847 Michigan State Constitution.

It is fitting that, 157 years after that historic day, the people of Michigan are once again looking at the question.

Our only hope is that this important and inspiring slice of history becomes a part of the discussion. ★

*Martin Schreader*

# Marriage

*continued from page 5*

... are citizens," and are entitled to both equal access and equal protection under the law.

Since a municipal government, under the jurisdiction of a state, issues marriage licenses, the "equal protection" clause of the Constitution applies.

Put simply, the Fourteenth Amendment gives same-sex couples the same rights to equal access to a marriage license as it does to a man-woman couple.

This is why the fascistic Religious Right feels the need to push through a Constitutional amendment; they know very well that the Constitution as it reads today allows for all manner of democratic reforms — including equal rights for gays and lesbians.

This is not to say, of course, that we have illusions that any of the capitalist politicians who hear this argument will change their minds.

On the contrary, we fully expect that, given a choice between the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the demands of their capitalist paymasters, they will follow their wallet's wishes every time.

It is not in their interest to do otherwise.

WE SOCIALISTS STAND fully in favor of the full democratic rights of same-sex couples to marry.

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# Monument

*continued from page 3*

At the arraignment, lawyers for the two fascists tried to say that their clients were only making a "political statement" about crime in Detroit.

Magistrate Steve Lockhart, who oversaw the arraignment, didn't buy it. "This is definitely not a prank," said Lockhart. "This is a threat. This is the same as a cross burning."

Cashman and Price face felony vandalism and malicious destruction of property charges, which could result in up to five years in prison.

The defacing of the Joe Louis monument is only a more brutish expression of the attacks the City of Detroit has faced over the last period.

The actions of Cashman and Price can-

It is not because we encourage marriage but because we encourage democracy that we take this position.

The defense of democratic rights for all is essential to the struggle for expanding and fundamentally improving both democracy and society as a whole.

Here in Michigan, the Socialist Party has been active in organizing to defend the rights of gays and lesbians, including organizing an Equal Rights Rally in Lapeer after the county commission passed an ordinance restricting their democratic rights.

During the election campaign this year, Socialist candidates will be the most consistent defenders of democracy and equal rights, taking on the bigotry and institutionalized oppression supported and perpetuated by the twin parties of capitalism.

For Socialists, a broad and more generous formal democracy paves the way for a social revolution, a real democratic system — in politics, economics, culture and social relations — administered by the working majority.

The readers of the *Michigan Socialist* can be certain that a Socialist administration, on a local, statewide or national level, would make the words "I do" for same-sex couples into a rallying cry for democracy and liberation. ★

*A special thank you to "Waverley Hills Hiker" of Democratic Underground for the headline suggestion — The Editor*

not be separated from those taken by suburban municipal governments or the legislators in Lansing.

The only difference between them is that Cashman and Price were more honest about their motivations than are politicians like Republican State Rep. Julian, who is pushing to bring the death penalty to Michigan (or his personal cheerleader, *Detroit News* columnist Pete Waldmeier) or Democratic Mayor Kilpatrick.

Many residents of Superior Township have since made public statements denouncing what Cashman did, and saying that the people who live there do not condone the kind of fascistic politics and actions he holds.

We of the Socialist Party hope to further test that contention this November, in the Superior Township Parks Commission elections. ★

*Martin Schreader*

# Caucus

continued from page 16

by taxicab, trying desperately to find where they were supposed to vote.

"Too many have been beaten, jailed and killed for this most precious right to vote," said Sheffield. "We will not roll over. This was no glitch."

Meanwhile, the leading figures of the Michigan Democratic Party have already begun to line up to defend the caucus results and dismiss the demands of African-American voters.

"No voters were disenfranchised in the city of Detroit," said Mark Brewer, Executive Chair of the MDP and the person responsible for organizing the caucus.

Melvin Butch Hollowell, Chair of the MDP, attempted to pass the buck: "The delegation selection process [i.e., the Feb. 7 caucus — LM] was the responsibility of Mark Brewer."

Democratic Governor Jennifer Granholm attempted to spin the story: "The bottom line is we had the second highest turnout in history."

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, on the other hand, was blunt in his reply. He was quoted in the *Detroit News*, calling the coalition's challenge "overboard and crap."

At least one of them is being honest about the MDP's view.

THE 2000 ELECTION confirmed in striking and terrific detail the contention that Socialists have asserted for decades: even the most "liberal" section of the capitalist class, or its agents, cannot and will not defend basic democratic rights.

When democratic-minded people in Florida and across the country mobilized to counter the actions of the Republican Party aimed at shutting down the manual recount of votes, the Democrats moved to defend their partners in crime and stop, or minimize, the protests.

When Jesse Jackson sought to organize protests against the developing Republican coup, the Democratic National Committee united with the Republicans and the capitalists, forcing him to call off the events.

When members of the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Progressive Caucus challenged the validity of Florida's Electoral Votes in January 2001, not one Democratic Senator — including then-vice presidential candidate Joe Lieberman, then-Senate president Al Gore, or the two current front-runners for the 2004 nomination, John Kerry and John Edwards — stood up to defend the democratic rights of African Americans.

Honestly, should we expect the Michigan Democrats to act any differently than their national leadership? The answer, of course, is no.

African American voters across Michi-

gan are right to be angry and frustrated by the callous indifference shown by Michigan Democratic Party leaders.

But anger and frustration has only so much value. Unless broader lessons are drawn from this experience, it is likely the situation will not change fundamentally.

The Socialist Party of Michigan will be fielding candidates in the November 2004 election for local and statewide offices.

We will be challenging both major parties, standing up for the rights and interests of the most exploited and oppressed in this society — people of color, women, gays and lesbians, etc.

The cornerstone of our platform will be winning the battle for democratic rights and a really democratic society.

Concretely, that means we will be fighting for the rights of the people of Detroit and the rest of Michigan, starting with the right to vote.

We encourage all readers of the *Michigan Socialist* to get involved in this campaign.

You can help with circulating petitions to get the SPMI on the ballot; you can help by joining the Party and actively promoting a Socialist alternative to the un-Democrats.

Most importantly, do not let someone else "represent" you, especially if they do not appear to care about your rights.

Represent yourself! Join the Socialist Party and make it your own. ★

# Kucinich

continued from page 11

advanced through voting Democratic and attempts to convince them to play by the rules of a game that demands rallying behind the nominee when push comes to shove.

That is to say, however unwittingly, he is actually playing a useful role for the corporate whores of the DNC and DLC, luring pissed-off ex-Democrats back into the party, only to hand over his base to John Kerry or, at best, the equally pro-war, mainstream

Democrat John Edwards.

So where does this leave Kucinich's supporters?

Our advice to them is very simple: if you support Kucinich's goals of universal employment at a living wage, universal not-for-profit health care, withdrawal from Iraq and so forth, don't waste your vote on a candidate who promotes the opposite agenda.

Rather, support the electoral campaigns of the Socialist Party, which both shares all of those goals and is realistically aware of the massive class-struggle tactics that will be necessary to translate them into reality.

Vote for the Socialist Party — Lisa Welt-

man for Michigan Board of Education, Ben Burgis for Michigan State University Board of Trustees, and any Socialist candidates that may be running for local offices in your area.

Where there are no Socialist candidates, vote for any left-wing Green candidates who at least espouse an explicit or heavily implied anti-capitalist and decidedly pro-working class outlook.

Above all, to paraphrase Joe Hill, don't just vote, organize!

Electoral campaigns are a useful platform for agitating for radical socialist ideas, and putting in place some candidates who can use their elective offices to be part of the perhaps struggle, but they aren't enough.

Join us in helping to build a mass, militant activist movement, in the workplace, in our communities and on the streets, to fight for the short-term goals that we share with the Kucinich supporters and for the long-term goal of the democratic transformation of American society. ★

Like what you read here? Wanna talk about it?

Join us online at the SPMI's new discussion board

[www.mi-socialists.org/phpBB2](http://www.mi-socialists.org/phpBB2)

# Women

continued from page 16

women under 17 to seek an abortion.

That bill would have required a judge to partially base his or her decision on issuing a “judicial waiver,” a legal document that allows the woman to obtain an abortion without parental consent, on the woman’s “sexual activity, understanding of the risks, school attendance and academic performance, and dependence on her parents.”

As well, the bill would have outlawed “judge shopping” — i.e., seeking out a judge that does not inject their own conservative, anti-choice morals into their legal decisions.

Gov. Granholm vetoed the bill on Feb. 6. The state legislature was unable to override it.

WHILE SOME MAY take comfort in the fact that Granholm vetoed these bills, Socialists can not.

The motion to override Granholm’s veto of the parental consent restrictions only failed by three votes, and there is little doubt that Right To Life, using the apparatus of their political arm, the Michigan Republican Party, can collect the signatures needed to bypass the governor’s office.

In other words, the vetoes by Granholm are little more than a minor obstacle to the bipartisan drive to restrict women’s rights.

Both Republicans and Democrats in the state legislature have lined up to further attack women’s rights.

For example, the author of the vetoed parental consent bill was a Democrat from Allen Park.

Also, given the close division in the legislature between Democrats and Republicans, the fact that the override vote was so close to passage is another indicator.

This makes it clear that, when it comes to protecting their right to choose, women cannot rely on either of the two capitalist parties.

As we have seen, even if Granholm does veto a bill, all the anti-choice forces have to do is turn to their base among the religious fundamentalists, and their bipartisan clique in Lansing, to get their way.

GENUINE SOCIALISTS, those who believe in the liberation of all humanity, are the most consistent defenders of women’s rights and control over their own bodies.

That control begins with the right to decide if they wish to have children or not.

Forcing women to carry a fetus to term makes them little more than incubators for creating the next generation of bosses, managers and workers.

It reduces women to the status of a “living machine,” treated no differently than a metal stamping press or form molder.

All talk about the “sanctity of life” for these elements is little more than a moralistic cover — propaganda that is designed to justify their second-class treatment of women and that flies in the face of all basic scientific understanding of the development of human life.

In November, to say nothing of before and after, it is important that pro-choice voters remember which parties were willing to turn women into machines, and which ones fight for their rights and liberation. ★

workers often raised their voices in opposition to management and the Union officials without members of the WDC even being present.

But, for me, the most valuable lesson learned was the importance of a working-class leadership.

That is, if working people are going to be freed from the shackles of wage slavery, it is going to be the workers themselves that do it — not a circle of “enlightened” leftists or some other “leadership team” from outside the working class. ★

*In the next issue of the Michigan Socialist, we will continue this discussion by looking at how these lessons apply to future struggles.*



## ■ Water Dept. double standard

Eighteen months ago, Detroit officials announced a crackdown on overdue water bills. It was said that \$59 million was owed to the Detroit Water and Sewage Department by residents and businesses.

Almost immediately, working people in Detroit, Highland Park and Hamtramck were targeted for shutoffs.

Most of these shutoffs were done as the weather turned cold, meaning that residents were also forced to endure bitter cold temperatures with no heat and no water.

But now, an audit of the water department’s outstanding bills shows who are the biggest deadbeats: the capitalists.

Of the \$48 million still owed to DWSD, close to \$19 million is owed by corporations — none of which are under threat of shutoff.

It would be interesting to compare this list of top deadbeats to the list of recipients of “corporate welfare” from the City and state.

## ■ Another cigarette tax?!

It seems Gov. Granholm has a brilliant idea about how to help balance the state budget: increase the taxes on a pack of cigarettes by 80 percent.

Over the past decade, Michigan residents who smoke watched as the tax quintupled, from 25 cents to \$1.25 a pack. With Granholm’s proposed tax, the amount will rise to \$2 a pack.

Granholm says the proposed tax will add \$300 million to the state budget, helping to close the \$1 billion gap.

Never mind, of course, that most smokers are workers making well under the average wage, and are already overburdened by taxes and high prices, while being forced to take wage concessions.

Never mind, as well, that nicotine is an addictive drug, and it is not possible for most smokers to simply quit “cold turkey” — which means that poor smokers will be put further into debt.

If the state government was really interested in closing the “budget gap,” then maybe they should stop giving handouts to greedy corporations.

*Michigan Briefs are compiled by the staff of the Michigan Socialist.*

# Parsec

continued from page 7

In this sense, the document signed was less of a contract and more of a “cease-fire” between the Union and Parsec.

5. THIS PERIOD OFFERED the most lessons. Far from what we are often told by both labor “experts” and their left-wing appendages, workers employed by subcontractors are (or can be) just as militant, and can learn just as much, as their more “aristocratic” brothers and sisters.

As well, workers do not need to be “led” as much as offered a guide to self-action; the



# 'This was no glitch'

## African Americans challenge Mich. Democratic Caucus results

By **L. MEYERS**

*The Michigan Socialist*

WHEN THE FIVE candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination emerged from the Feb. 7 Michigan caucuses, it was thought that it would be known as little more than a footnote.

However, a coalition of community and political organizations in Detroit have launched a lawsuit challenging the results, saying that the Michigan Democratic Party "trampled on the voting rights of African Americans."

The lawsuit, brought by the Michigan Democratic Black Caucus, the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus, the Detroit Chapter of the NAACP and the Detroit City Council, contends that Black voters in Detroit, Flint and other Michigan cities were

systematically disenfranchised and denied their right to vote.

"For Detroit, the only difference between Florida in 2000 and Michigan in 2004 is the spelling of the state names and the weather," said the Rev. Horace Sheffield III, spokesperson for the coalition.

"African Americans were stripped bare of our right to vote by those who claim to be our friends."

According to Sheffield, several caucus sites in Detroit were moved or closed on the day of the caucus.

In Benton Harbor, Flint, Saginaw and other cities, polling sites were listed incorrectly or moved at the last minute.

The result was that thousands of voters were forced to wander aimlessly throughout the day, either on foot, in their cars or

*continued on page 14*



Voters in Dearborn cast their ballots in the Michigan Democratic Caucus. They were lucky. In Detroit, this seemingly simple task was denied to thousands of Democratic voters, according to a coalition of political, government and civil rights organizations.

## **Borders workers get a contract**

AS WE WENT to press last issue, we learned that the workers at Borders, Inc., signed a contract with the company.

The Union contract at Borders' Store No. 1, in Ann Arbor, represents a significant step forward for workers in the so-called "service industry."

The new two-year deal includes job-security provisions, overtime guarantees, a grievance procedure and "agency shop" status for the Union.

While little room was gained in economic areas, and health benefits are still fully governed by Borders, the gains made in this contract are a real victory for the workers.

We congratulate the workers on getting recognition and a contract. ★

# A falling barometer

## Women's rights in Mich. under increased attack

By **LISA WELTMAN**

*The Michigan Socialist*

THE AMOUNT OF progress a society has made can be measured by the status of its women, someone once wrote.

That is, the amount of freedom women have serves as a kind of "social barometer" for the society as a whole.

If this is the case, then here in Michigan the barometer is falling significantly. Two examples stand out.

Last year, the Michigan State Legislature passed a bill that would restrict so-called "partial-birth abortions," a medical procedure that is performed more than 90 percent of the time on women whose life is at risk if they carry the fetus to term.

Because the bill had no exception for

when the life of the mother is threatened, and because the definition of "life" contained in the bill was so vague that it could also be applied to first-trimester abortions, Governor Jennifer Granholm vetoed it.

But now, a coalition of anti-choice and anti-women's rights organizations are pushing to overturn the veto.

Headed by Michigan Right To Life, this anti-choice coalition is seeking to collect close to a quarter-million signatures in order to revive the bill and have the state legislature pass it — a process that would bypass the governor's office completely.

A week after this anti-woman coalition kicked off its efforts, on Jan. 23, 2004, the state legislature passed another anti-choice bill, this time further restricting the right of

*continued on page 15*