

WILL HRC
CROSS THE
PICKET LINE?

Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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■ IN THIS ISSUE

A BIG MYSTERY

What Do Cornel West, Paul Wellstone, Bob Reich, Anna Quindlen, and The Nation's editor All Have in Common?

They Like a Man...

- Who's Wall Street's Serf
- Who's the Drug Companies' Errand Boy
- Who Was a Big Time Supporter of the Contras
- Who Spent 18 Years in the Senate and Never Stuck His Neck Out

AIR CRASHES

- Meet the FAA, Mouth-piece for the Industry

UNCERTAIN TRUMPET:

- James P. Hoffa and the Overnite Strike

WAR ON THE CHECHIENS

- FBI's Shameful Role

The Inflation of Timid Bill Bradley

It's one of the marvels of the season that Bill Bradley has been able to muster to his cause such bankable liberal names as Senator Paul Wellstone, Prof. Cornel West, Robert Reich and the editor of The Nation, Katrina vanden Heuvel. This passion for Bradley is strange. After all, Bradley is a man who flirted with the idea of running for the presidency in 1996 on an independent ticket, with Colin Powell

Lately Al Gore has been tagging Bill Bradley as a free-spending liberal of the kind that the vice president and Bill Clinton have worked so tirelessly to extirpate from the party. There isn't much substance to the charge. Indeed, on the big issues, trade, labor, defense, crime, health care and the environment, Bradley and Gore are pretty much indistinguishable. Both sedulously follow the neo-liberal line charted by the Democratic Leadership Council back in the late 1980s. In the past Gore has pandered to the right, on issues such as race, crime and tobacco. Bradley's signals to Wall Street that he's their man are, even in these lax times, shameless well beyond the point of indelicacy. In the one-paragraph statement on economic policy on the Bradley website, phrases such as "prudent fiscal policy", "open markets", "lowest possible tax rates" and "keep capital flowing freely" bow and scrape from every line. Most "left liberals" (these days the taxonomy of progressiveness inside the Democratic Party is a tricky business) should have known something was amiss when Bradley sought and got the endorsements of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Bob Kerrey. If that wasn't evidence enough of Bradley's neoliberalism, surely the sanctioning of his campaign by Paul Volcker and Warren Buffett should have

rammed the point home. Even Clinton's man Paul Begala has a hard time telling the difference between Gore and Bradley: "there is no true liberal to be found in this race... just two centrists that, watch them very closely, will become more so."

Anna Quindlen, an early Bradley cheerleader, has praised the former New York Knicks' forward for his "moral authority." And there have been some principled votes in his career: for national health care, against welfare "reform", against the nomination of Alan Greenspan to chair the Federal Reserve. But Al Gore claims that Bradley has a habit of quitting when the going gets tough and the vice president has a point. Though he now proclaims that a president has "to confront challenges", Bradley has been a timid politician, rarely sticking his neck out for any matter of principle. Bradley is now retreating from his one shining moment in the senate, a passionate speech against George Bush's war on Iraq. The former senator says his vote was "only to give sanctions more time. I wasn't opposed to using force".

Despite being endorsed by several antiwar groups (most recently the Iowa Citizens Peace Group) Bradley's record on military issues is mixed. Early in this campaign Bradley positioned himself as the only candidate calling for a cut in the Pentagon's budget, targeting weapons systems that "primarily benefit arms companies". But even before the first primary Bradley has scuttled back in pell mell retreat from this daring onslaught on the Merchants of Death and from his earlier view that the US no longer needs to maintain sufficient forces to fight two major wars simultaneously. He's prudently deferred most spe- (Bradley, continued on page 7)

Our Little Secrets

HRC'S DILEMMA

Connoisseurs of the business career of the First Lady will recall that in her high-rolling days at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, she and her associates put together a deal that involved the sale of nursing homes in four states which resulted in substantial fees for the partners of Rose Law, including HRC. For the elderly residents of the Beverly nursing homes the deal was less propitious, since it involved sharply increased fees.

Now the candidate-in-all-but-name for Pat Moynihan's Senate seat in New York has refreshed her old ties to the nursing home industry in a manner once again profitable to herself.

December 1 sees a fundraiser in Boston for Hillary Clinton hosted by Elaine Schuster, a big DNC funder in the Northeast. Schuster and her husband derive their prosperous station in life from real estate and nursing homes. At present their Wingate Nursing Homes are enduring the misfortune, from the Schusters' point of view, of being organized by SEIU Local 285. The union and its ally in Massachusetts, Jobs With Justice, have demanded

that the Schusters recognize the union forthwith or they will picket the December 1 fundraiser.

The Schusters are in a jam. Some time ago they hired the notorious union-busting law firm Jackson Lewis, but now they face the prospect of plunging the First Lady into yet another political imbroglio. Will Hillary (who's already been personally endorsed for Senate by James P. Hoffa) cross the picket line? Bill of course would find a win-win solution to this dilemma, sucking in the money while simultaneously proclaiming his fervent sympathy for the workers' cause. Tough and resourceful organizers, Local 285 and its allies aren't prone to flattery, and Hillary's political skills may be inadequate for the sort of flimflam her husband could pull off in his sleep.

BUT NO CLOSURE FOR TREES...

Referring to the collapsed pile of 7,000 logs which crushed eleven Texas A&M students to death, state senator Kay Barrington said, "My feeling is they won't get any closure if they just take it down. We could get it built again in five days, because you know, they died to build it. They wouldn't want to just put it away. They'd want to burn it." Here at CounterPunch we took an interested look at the huge pile of logs—piled up for the annual bonfire—which killed those unfortunate Aggies. Now, 7,000 logs with an average of 12 inches in diameter add up to a lot of lumber and a lot of money. And east Texas hasn't got much timber left. Our guess is that the trees either came out of the Ozarks, or were trucked up from south of the border. As an editor at the LA Times remarked to us, "hell, if you burned a pile of logs that big in our area you'd probably go to prison for life."

STACKS OF BODIES

When we last left Mel Carnahan, the Democratic governor of Missouri with a taste for dressing up in blackface, he was fending off charges leveled by aides to Senator John Ashcroft that he is a racist. Ashcroft and Carnahan are squaring off in the 2000 senate race in the most racially

charged campaign since David Duke last ran for congress. Carnahan, who had properly raised questions about Ashcroft's views of blacks, after the senator sabotaged Ronnie White's (the first black to sit on the Missouri Supreme Court) nomination to the federal bench, vowed that his views on racial equality had evolved considerably since the early 1960s, when he was doing "coon show" routines at local Kiwanis halls. Carnahan claims he is now a fierce defender of civil rights.

But is he? Another contentious issue in the campaign is the death penalty. Ashcroft is a former minister who wants to send as many blacks to the chair as possible. In fact, the senator, whose presidential aspirations were snuffed out after several bumbling appearances on CNN's Crossfire, subverted the White nomination (dubbed "Judge Not White Enough" by some of his supporters) by calling him "soft on crime" and by suggesting (erroneously it turned out) that he had gone out of his way to keep blacks from being executed. On the floor of the Senate, Ashcroft referred to White's rulings as "minority" opinions. Then Ashcroft chided Carnahan for being soft on the death penalty, noting that in January he had spared the life of Darrell Mease, who was facing execution for killing a 19-year old paraplegic. Carnahan said that he only commuted Mease's death sentence so as not to embarrass the Pope during his visit to St. Louis. Later an aide to Carnahan defended the governor's zealous administration of the death penalty thus: "Mel's been stacking up bodies left and right." The facts bear out the aide's chilling boast. Since 1990, Missouri has executed 40 people, 22 whites and 17 blacks. There are 83 inmates on death row, 44 whites and 40 blacks.

Contrast this with the stance of Senator Russ Feingold, the Democrat from Wisconsin. On November 10, Feingold introduced a bill that would abolish the federal death penalty and pledged to travel the country speaking to church groups and human rights organizations to promote it. It will be a Sisyphean struggle. The last time there was a full debate in the Senate on the death penalty was in 1995 when the Effective Death Penalty and Comprehensive Terrorism Prevention Act was being worked up. Feingold made an impassioned speech against the bill, but the measure passed 91-8. The eight opposed to the death penalty: Mark Hatfield, Bob

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Packwood, Paul Simon, Carol Moseley-Braun, Claiborne Pell, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Paul Wellstone and Feingold. Only Wellstone and Feingold remain in the senate.

THE UNNAMABLE

The aroma of the new Indonesian government headed by Abdurrahman 'Gus Dur' Wahid smells a lot like the old Suharto regime. Desperate to prove its worthiness to the captains of international finance at the World Bank and the IMF, the Wahid government is putting together a team of "experts" to advise the Indonesian president's Economic, Social and Security Council. "In facing the IMF and the World Bank, we will now have a sounding board supported by highly competent, internationally recognized and well-experienced figures," said Kwik Kian Gie, Wahid's economic czar. The Indonesian Observer unearthed the names of the "figures", Singapore's senior minister Lee Kuan Yew, former US fed chairman Paul Volcker and Henry Kissinger. When confronted with this list, Kwik pleaded: "Please don't mention their names."

There is a good reason Kwik was desperate to keep the names a secret. To many in Indonesia the very mention of Kissinger strikes horrible memories, fear and outrage. It was Kissinger, and his sidekick Lawrence Eagleburger, who gave the greenlight for the Indonesian crackdown on East Timor in 1974 and did so much to abet the militarization of the country under Suharto. After leaving office, Kissinger and Eagleburger both landed on the boards of corporations doing business in Indonesia. Eagleburger served as a director of Phillips Petroleum, which has huge holdings in the Timor Gap. Kissinger sat on the board of Freeport-McMoRan, the mining conglomerate run by Jim Bob Moffett. Freeport operates the gaping Grasmore gold mine, said to be one of the largest in the world, where it, and Indonesian security troops, have savagely abused local villagers. Some have labeled actions against the tribe genocidal. For his services, Kissinger receives more than \$40,000 a year in director's fees and benefits. He owns more than \$1.18 million in Freeport stock and stock options.

THE WHITE STUFF?

Some CounterPunchers may remember our story a few years ago about the

"[Chuck Yeager] said, 'Mr. President, you ought to fire that green-chili eating brown-faced so and so.'"

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which had been funneling corporate money to federal biologists to do research that benefited the aims of those very companies. The NFWF is a congressionally-chartered foundation created during the Reagan years. There were allegations during the war against the Nicaragua that the Foundation was used as a way of channeling "private" money to the Contras, under topics like "aerial surveys of habitat for neo-tropical migrant songbirds on the Miskito coast". More recently, supporters of the Zapatistas have charged that the Foundation has funded efforts to spy on them through numerous projects in the Lacandon rainforest.

The NFWF is run by a longtime Washington hand named Amos Eno. For years Eno was a fixture at the National Audubon Society, where he was known as one of the more rightwing members of a very conservative outfit. On October 6 Eno appeared at a banquet for Fish and Wildlife Service employees at Shepardstown, West Virginia. Eno was there to present the annual "Chuck Yeager" award to a Fish and Wildlife employee. The award is named after the former pilot, glorified by Tom Wolfe in *The Right Stuff*, and recent board member of Louisiana-Pacific, the Portland-based timber giant. During his opening remarks, Eno made the following statement: "I knew Chuck Yeager and Chuck Yeager was a good friend of mine. Chuck Yeager knew how to stand up to the powers that be. Let me give you an example of how Chuck Yeager stood up to the powers that be. As some of you may know, both Chuck Yeager and I had problems with Manuel Lujan [Secretary of the Interior under George Bush]. Let me tell you what Chuck Yeager said to President Bush about Manny Lujan. By the way, I hope there are no Hispanics in the room. He said, 'Mr. President, you ought to fire that green chili-eating brown-faced so and so.' As I said, I hope there are no Hispanics in the room."

Of course, there were Hispanics in the room and others who were rattled by Eno's racist anecdote. A memo was sent to Jamie Rappaport Clark, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Clark de-

nounced Eno in a letter to Magalen Bryant, chair of the Foundation's board. Clark said she was "outraged and offended" and said Eno should be canned. Eno wasn't canned. He received a suspension and a reprimand. The mild treatment has angered La Raza and the Hispanic Environmental Council, who took their case to Bruce Babbitt, who sits on the Foundation's board. But Babbitt has been unresponsive, saying in a letter that he will take no further action against Eno.

BUY BEN'S BOOK

The CounterPunch Book Club can highly recommend *Lost Property, Memoirs & Confessions of a Bad Boy*, the new paperback by our close friend (listed in our masthead as counselor) Ben Sonnenberg. Its elegant cover features Ben as a rakish and sinister looking dandy, wearing a tweed suit from Savile Row. Stitched to the inner breast pocket by the tailor is "Sonnenberg" and the date the suit was completed, 1968. We know this because Ben, laid up on account of MS, handed the suit on to a CounterPunch editor twenty-four years later and around this time of year he starts wearing it.

Apropos books, keep an eye on the CounterPunch website (www.counterpunch.org). Soon we'll be putting up the editors' estimate of the best hundred-odd non-fiction, English-language books published in this century.

Incidentally, if you're worried about Y2K disturbing your CounterPunch subscription, why not be sure to renew early now before all systems shut down. Either phone our 800 number (1-800-840-3683 and have a credit card ready) or address all such business communications and renewals directly to our West Coast office, to Becky Grant, business manager, CounterPunch, PO Box 228, Petrolia, Ca 95558. If you put a phone number in on a note with your cheque, Becky will acknowledge it, and you can hunker down for the millennial apocalypse, certain in the knowledge that your CounterPunches, even if delayed by forces beyond our control, will reach you without any break. CP.

The Valujet Trial

Air Crashes: The Blame Game

Early reports from the EgyptAir investigation make it clear that the U.S. crash sleuths—egged on by an eager press—are following a traditional maxim in such procedures: When in doubt, blame the foreigners. Naturally, the Boeing Corporation, manufacturer of the ill-fated 767, has been an ardent proponent of the notion that co-pilot Gameel al-Batooty, overcome with Islamic fervor, pushed the plane into a suicide plunge.

For its part, the FBI has been using every means to seize control of the investigation, including the dissemination of faked evidence to buttress the suicide theory. Countless news articles highlighted an incriminating statement supposedly uttered by al-Batooty just before the plane began its death-dive: "I have made my decision now." It subsequently emerged that he never said any such thing and that the alleged statement was "somehow" included in a rough note circulated among government officials and duly leaked.

In Miami a further example of the blame-the-foreigners maxim is available in the form of the trial of Daniel Gonzalez, Mauro Valenzuela and Eugene Florence, former employees of a defunct company called SabreTech. They are charged with the murder of the 110 people who died when Valujet Flight 592 plunged into the Florida Everglades on May 11, 1996.

The aircraft in question, a DC-9, was an old plane with old wiring. Neither the autopilot nor the intercom were functioning. Flight attendants had to use a bullhorn to make announcements to passengers. Copious evidence indicated that the fire prompting the crash originated in the electrical systems in and around the cockpit. Eyewitness reports of the DC9's final seconds suggest that the pilots were attempting a crash landing, but failed because they were blinded by smoke from burning circuitry in the cockpit.

This was not what the FAA and the airline industry (much the same thing) wanted to hear. An electrical fire would have brought unwelcome scrutiny of

thousands of other planes of equivalent vintage and wiring. The FAA, furthermore, has an institutional aversion to the notion that cockpit smoke is the cause of many more crashes than are officially admitted. The agency instead snatched at a theory that fire broke out in a forward cargo compartment, ignited by oxygen generators normally carried in overhead compartments to supply supplementary oxygen through those yellow masks. The basis of the theory, and of the present prosecution in Miami, is that these generators caught fire because SabreTech (which had a maintenance contract with Valujet) loaded them on the doomed plane without safety caps. Subjected to severe jolting in the cargo hold, the generators ignited and started the fire. In its report on Flight 592, the National Transportation Safety Board did observe that smoke detectors in the forward hold would have prevented the crash.

But there's a problem. No one has succeeded in duplicating this chain of events. In November 1996, Inalab, an arson investigation laboratory in Honolulu, carried out a series of tests, commissioned by an airline equipment supplier, on generators in an effort to get them to ignite. In one of these tests a

generator canister was repeatedly dropped from a height of six feet onto a concrete floor. Despite this battering, the generator was not activated. Inalab rated "the overall probability of the oxygen canister involvement (in the 592 crash) about as likely as a snow storm in Miami".

The FAA carried out its own experiments to try and get generators to ignite in the manner postulated. But the only way in which they could get the generators to ignite was to pull the lanyards on the activation mechanism. Even then, out of five attempts, the agency achieved ignition in only three cases.

The in-house technicians rated this as a "statistically non-reproducible event" — hardly a fit basis for sending Gonzalez and the others away for a possible 55 years in prison. In any event, defense lawyer Martin Raskin contends that the defendants carefully wrapped the lanyards round the pin that activates the generators in a way that would have made it impossible for them to move the pin.

Subsequent to the crash, Valujet, which was never subjected to any criminal sanctions, effortlessly metamorphosed into AirTran, which recently reported a 75 percent increase in profits. CP

Hate Crime Nonsense

Through the fax machine surges a petition, signed by hundreds, urging passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. It begins with a nonsensical statement by John Buehren, president of the Unitarian Universalists: "We state strongly that violence on the basis of sexual orientation, race or gender is wrong, is evil, is reprehensible." So violence on any other basis is fine?

By the look of their addresses many of the signatories are liberal academics. Don't they see anything wrong in expanding the power of the feds, whom the prospective law would direct to investigate and prosecute all "hate crimes", with these being defined as not only those already on

the books, (based on religion, national origin, or color,) but also those based on bias towards "real or perceived sexual orientation, gender and disability"? Crime is crime. There are far too many laws on the books already, without this sort of pecking order in state-of-mind beastliness being proposed.

Meanwhile, the conversion of murder trials into rituals of personal vengeance is proceeding apace. The New Jersey legislature has been considering a bill that would allow relatives to display photographs of the victim to the jury in the penalty phase. It won't be long before a state sanctions participation of relatives in actual executions. CP

Who Planted the Bombs in Moscow?

How the FBI Aids Russia's War

At the very start of its "anti terror" campaign in the Caucasus, the Russian government reached out for solace and assistance to a sympathetic ally — FBI Director Louis Freeh and the FBI. Along with its savage military onslaught with bombs and shells, Moscow has been waging an internet war to shut down web sites maintained by their foes in the North Caucasus.

In September, Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Rushaylo announced that he had told Freeh that "funding by Osama Bin Laden of the Chechnya-based rebels had increased significantly". Freeh, who has long cherished his relationship with the Moscow interior ministry (whose troops are in the forefront of the present extermination campaign in Chechnya) immediately offered to help by supplying "technical experts" to assist in shutting down web sites inimical to Moscow. A British team has reportedly also been dispatched with the same mission.

But the Russians have in the past demonstrated a high level of technical expertise in this area (examples include successful invasions of Pentagon computer systems) and need no help from the FBI or anyone else in disrupting the offending sites. So the wily Muscovites may well have a different goal in mind. By engaging outsiders—in this instance the Americans and the British—to assist in the war in the Caucasus, they are making them complicit in the crimes presently being committed.

"President Bill Clinton has in effect supported the activities of the Russian authorities in Chechnya", reported the anchorman for ORT, Russia's largest television network, shortly after Clinton finished his speech to the European security conference in Istanbul on November 17. During his speech, Clinton said Russia had a right to defend itself from "terrorists", which has been the position of most Western leaders.

While the Yeltsin clique shrugs off accompanying protests from Clinton and his team (Talbot has called for the Russians to restrict themselves to "minimal" civilian casualties) they are relishing what they see as positive signals from the camp of George W. Bush. Russian diplomats in

Washington are spreading word that George W's foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice (currently at Stanford, having worked at the NSC in the G.H. Bush era), recently assured the Russian ambassador that the Caucasus and Transcaucasus region (i.e., countries such as Chechnya, Georgia and Azerbaijan) are "not part of America's vital interests" and that therefore a Bush Administration would reduce military contacts with these countries. This implied abandonment of the Georgians and Azerbaijanis, not to mention the Chechens, stands in signal contrast to George W's public denunciations of the Russian campaign in Chechnya.

All this notwithstanding, Russia's war, which human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalev aptly characterises as employing

"In Moscow there are more and more people are saying that 'forty percent of me thinks the Kremlin did this.'"

"the methods of Nato in pursuit of Milosevic's ends" is a huge embarrassment for the Clinton administration. And even if the White House and State Department accept Russia's rationale for the onslaught in the Caucasus at face value, there are certainly others in government service who know better.

Whoever ordered the September bombings that provided the Kremlin with its justification for the present war, it was almost certainly not the Chechens. The explosions, which killed 300 people, were the work of experts with access not only to an extremely powerful and generally unavailable explosive but also to construction plans for the apartment buildings that were demolished in the blasts. Carried out across a two-week period, the four bombings (three in Moscow and one in the provincial city of Volgodonsk all bore the same "signature" both in terms of the explosive used (in each case a quarter-ton of hexogen, manufactured specifically for Russian artillery shells in a single Urals plant) and in the professional manner in which the points were positioned to cause maximum damage. In one case the site of the bomb had been searched by police only three hours

before the blast.

"The Chechens have never demonstrated the ability to operate outside their own area", observes a Friend of CounterPunch with unrivaled contacts and experience as a senior US diplomat stationed for many years in Moscow, "certainly not this degree of professionalism. You can however find these skills in the Russian security and military services. I find it quite easy to believe that someone in the FSB or the GRU [respectively, Russian secret police and military intelligence] organized this. But the evidence will be very hard to find. This was a mass contract killing and usually the people who carry out such contracts do not live very long themselves. I find it telling that the authorities have made no real effort to investigate.

"In Moscow at the moment there are more and more people who are saying to me in private—and these are well informed people, not nuts—that 'forty percent of me thinks the Kremlin did this'. A month ago none of them were saying that, and they wouldn't dare say it in public now. You have to remember that there were bombings on Moscow subways and buses that killed two people just before the 1996 election, and I have been told by friends who were very, very close to the Yeltsin campaign that Korshakov's people did it." (Alexander Korshakov was Yeltsin's personal security chief, fired just after the election.)

Historians should note that employment of provocateurs directed from the highest levels is a rich tradition in Russia. Evno Azef, a secret police agent who rose to head the Social Revolutionary Party's terror squad, organized the assassination of the Minister of the Interior in 1904 and followed up with the killing of the Tsar's uncle the following year. As a former denizen of the CIA observes: "George Tenet has enough career survival instincts to know that he should never carry over such intelligence to the White House." CP

Hoffa Jr.'s Big Test

The Overnite Strike

Teamster president James P. Hoffa is in the process of waging the union's biggest strike since UPS, against one of the country's biggest non-union shipping companies, Overnite Transportation. As such this is the most significant "Right to Organize" strike since the AFL changed hands and made that its slogan. When it's finally over, the strike will almost certainly be more significant for what it says about Hoffa Power than anything else.

Overnite ships goods for such heavy-traffic retail outfits as Home Depot. During the Carey years, 37 of its 166 terminals were organized and voted to join the union. That was five years ago. The company ignored the vote; Carey let the workers, and the organizing drive, languish, while Overnite racked up one labor-law violation after the other. More than 1,000 such charges have been filed by the union with the National Labor Relations Board. It is remarkable that the striking workers at Overnite have stayed together all these years, with no guarantees, no benefits, no contract.

When he was running for union president Hoffa had to belittle the Teamsters 1997 victory over UPS (a strike he opposed until it looked like a sure winner); his Bring Back the Pride, Bring Back the Power rhetoric would have sounded tinny otherwise. But there aren't too many people who think Overnite's fanatically anti-union owners will crumble and begin negotiating with the 3,600 workers—less than half of Overnite's workforce—who have voted to join the union. The guess is that maybe the company chiefs will lose so much money they'll be forced to sell, or perhaps they'll be driven out of business. In the latter case, 8,200 drivers and loading-dock workers would be out of jobs, but the message would be clear, "Don't fuck with Jimmy Hoffa".

Whatever his actual instincts on the matter, Hoffa had to take on Overnite: it's in freight, the division of his deified father and his own largest constituency; and, with only 20 percent of the nation's truck drivers unionized, it's hard to make an argument for others to join up if some of those who already have can't show anything but grief for it.

So Hoffa made Overnite a major cam-

paign issue. Then, in his post-election purge of anyone who might have the scent of Carey, he fired 100 organizers who had the best relationships with the rank and file.

When Hoffa says the union can't lose "market share", it's true enough, since a defeat would pass the ammunition to employers everywhere, but the idiom of the business pages meshes seamlessly with his own style, his substance too. Only 600 to 800 of the workers are receiving strike benefits, and very few have scabbed. That could be because most of them have other jobs, jobs arranged for them through deals Hoffa made with Overnite's competitors. Of course, unions have to protect workers during a strike, if only because scabbing spells weakness. But the picket lines at Overnite are not the overwhelming shows of energy and tensed courage—its own special expression of power—that marked the UPS strike. And unlike Carey, Hoffa is not out front, on the lines, with the workers; he's the CEO.

Teamster locals unconnected to this fight are often nonchalant or disinterested in the fates of these striking Overnite workers. The line goes something like this: they don't pay dues, they're not real Teamsters, and, anyway, "local autonomy" was Hoffa's biggest campaign promise. Every local gets to operate as its own fiefdom. Many of them don't belong to the Central Labor Councils in their cities. Many have never heard of Jobs With Justice, which across the country has been visiting Overnite's customers, organizing rallies, walking the picket lines.

When the union launches a major national fight, maybe these sit-on-their-hands locals come in and maybe they won't. Maybe they won't even return phonecalls—as has been happening all over the country even when Teamsters HQ is on the other end of the line. With such response from Teamster locals, it's been

hard work to get a lot of enthusiasm going among other unions. As one Jobs with Justice activist in the Northeast puts it, "Solidarity doesn't click with them".

Absent a majority of Overnite's workers on strike, the Teamsters have never aimed to shut down the company's day-to-day operations; they've focussed instead on its customers, scaring them into shifting their business elsewhere, cutting into Overnite's market share at the busiest season of the year. The news from some of its biggest terminals is that very little is moving; from Memphis comes word that shipments are down by two-thirds; from Atlanta that days go by where the loading dock is still. The union reports that nationwide Overnite's business is down by 30 percent. The company says 3 percent. Whatever the truth, the union had expected the strike to last three weeks. It is now in its fifth week and no one talks as if it will be resolved before Christmas.

The Teamsters' agenda here is way beyond Overnite. If Overnite can undercut wages, violate workers' rights, then so can every other freight company. The Teamsters have done no successful, large-scale organizing in freight since 1980. But, in a way, these Overnite workers are expendable. Hoffa can afford to lose the fight for a contract and still win if he drives the company to ruin or destroys its value and massages a new buyer. That win would be measured in fear—no mean weapon in the contest with capital. (Though as we've seen with Coastal Berry in the very different strawberry campaign, deals with new buyers can be poison.) As for the workers, though, the Teamsters' boss will have to count on the Hoffa mythology, the get-tough, proud-to-be-a-Teamster rhetoric, to get workers to risk their jobs and security for the union. He told a whooping, stomping crowd at a recent fundraising dinner in New York for Labor Research Associates (roost of his well-paid consultant, postCommunist hustler and Number 1 Leftist for Hoffa, Greg Tarpinian) that under his leadership "the Teamsters are marching lock-step into the future". That is one kind of strength. Somehow it doesn't quite have the ring of "An injury to one is an injury to all." CP

This is the most significant "Right to Organize" strike since the AFL changed hands and made that its slogan.

cifics on military matters, telling the Des Moines Register "I don't want to battle the doctrine till we do the analysis." On the Star Wars absurdity (\$55 billion and counting), Bradley has maintained a sphinx-like silence. His own shield defense against troublesome questions about his posture on the Pentagon budget runs as follows: "The Pentagon's budget should be spent more efficiently, not cut or increased". Gore, bracingly upfront by comparison, recently told the Stop the Arms Race political action committee that he believes the military budget should be increased.

Bradley says he opposed the war in Vietnam, but joined the Air National Guard and says he would have served if called upon. The ex-senator avoided any comment on the US/UN sanctions against Iraq, where his oft proclaimed concern for children in need might have found appropriate expression about the death of 4,000-Iraqi kids a month, courtesy of the Clinton administration. The war against Serbia barely caught Bradley's attention. He surfaced only after the peace deal was brokered, saying "NATO has displayed impressive solidarity in Kosovo up to this time, and the negotiators have skillfully pursued a deal that would resolve the conflict...Our priority must be the welfare of the refugees. We should support those who wish to return and provide them targeted assistance. We should also support those refugees who do not wish to return but want to resettle elsewhere." Except, apparently, New Jersey, where many of the airlifted Kosovars were initially slated to land, but were ultimately not welcome.

Bradley was an ardent backer of Reagan's covert wars against Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Indeed, he once boasted of being the Democrats' "manager" of the war against the Sandinistas. We talked to a longtime staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations committee who described Bradley foreign policy ideas this way: "He's a political manic/depressive. One minute you could picture him going off to build pit toilets in Ghana, the next he'd be wanting to firebomb Managua."

Bradley often sounds as though he is reading from the same economic script that the Clintons were spouting at Renaissance weekends back in the early 1990s. Here's Bradley on the international economy: "America is the sole superpower in the world today. That means we have to conduct ourselves in a way that is com-

"One minute you could picture him going off to build pit toilets in Ghana, the next he'd be wanting to firebomb Managua."

mensurate with our values. We have to be sure that we have a strong international economy that takes more and more people to higher ground. I think our challenge for the country is to get more middle class people in the world. And if we had more middle class people in the world, they'd be buying more of our exports. Achieving that means prudent management of international economic policy as well as our domestic economy. The key to our foreign policy is to have the right policy and the right relationship with five countries in the world—that is, Mexico, Japan, China, Russia, and Germany. If we get those big questions right, then the world is going to be a safer place." Germany's inclusion on this list has more to do with Bradley's ever-present German-born wife, Ernestine, than any strategic master planning on his part.

What Bradley hasn't mentioned much (except for during his forays to Wall Street and Silicon Valley) is that he is a rabid free trader, hawking everything from NAFTA to WTO to the Multilateral Agreement on Investments. He has also been a full-throated supporter of the IMF. When Bradley left the Senate in 1994, saying he thought that "politics was broken", he didn't spend his time in monkish reflection. Instead, he landed a spot as vice-chair of JP Morgan's International Council.

When Friends of the Earth endorsed Bill Bradley over Al Gore, it raised the hackles on Gore's back and surprised many in the media. Gore believed that he had the environmental lobby sown up. When confronted with the League of Conservation Voters scorecard from their days in the senate, which showed Bradley with an 87 percent rating and Gore with a 65 percent rating, Gore replied "it was easier for Bradley to be an environmentalist because he represented New Jersey and not Tennessee".

While this assessment exposes the poverty of Gore's environmentalism, it's not entirely accurate. New Jersey may promote itself as the Garden State, but remember Gary, Indiana calls itself the Garden City. In fact, New Jersey is the chemical state and regularly battles Louisiana for top spot on the EPA's annual compilation of toxic emissions by state.

"It's not as if Bradley was bad on the environment," says Roy Giutierrez, a green from Jersey City. "He just seemed indifferent, as if he couldn't be bothered. When people needed his help, like at Toms River, he was AWOL." Tom's River is a deadly chemical landscape, the result of years of illegal dumping by Ciba-Giegy.

Bradley was in a place to make a difference. For years he was a ranking member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. While he was willing to attach his name to dozens of measures as a co-sponsor, he rarely took a leadership role. He backed Bush's Clean Air Act revisions of 1990, which opened a market in pollution credits, aka cancer bonds. From 1993 to 1994, when Clinton had assumed power and Democrats controlled both houses of Congress, few environmental measures were enacted, largely because they were bottled up in Bradley's committee. "He could have been a force to push through some key measures," says Steve Kelly, a Montana environmentalist. "But he never really showed guts to stand up to western Democrats like

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Max Baucus.”

Bradley has yet to earn the endorsement of the only real progressive left in the Senate, Russ Feingold of Wisconsin. Feingold is the outspoken proponent of campaign finance reform, a position that has earned him the enmity of the leadership of both parties. During his tight 1998 senate campaign against the well-heeled Rudy Boschwitz, Feingold refused to accept soft money and placed other restrictions on campaign donations. According to one senate source, Feingold, despite his well-known animus toward Clinton and Gore, has held off endorsing Bradley because he “thinks Bradley’s one of the biggest hypocrites in the race.”

Out on the stump Bradley talks about how the tides of big money have “corrupted and corroded” American politics. But in the boardrooms, Dollar Bill has proven himself to be a ruthless fundraiser. Between July and September, Bradley raised more than \$6.7 million, a half a million more than Gore. For the year, Bradley has raked in more than \$20 million from a bewildering array of sources led by the financial sector, Washington lobbyists, e-commerce firms and the drug companies. Goldman, Sachs executives alone have dumped in \$155,000, followed by Lehman Brothers (\$73,320), Merrill Lynch (\$56,690), Salomon Smith-Barney (\$50,150) and Morgan Stanley (\$45,000). The DC law/lobby outfits have been kind: Winston & Strawn (\$42,000) Mayer, Brown and Platt (\$31,350), Latham & Watkins (\$27,000), Skadden, Arps (\$26,850), Kirkland and Ellis (\$17,000)

and Sullivan & Cromwell (\$13,000). Bradley has collected checks from top executives at Microsoft, DreamWorks, Starbucks, America Online, Time/Warner, Deutsche Bank, Eli Lilly, IBM, Sara Lee, Beverly Coal, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, GE, Anheuser-Busch, Chase Manhattan, Sun Microsystems, Merck, Seagrams, Genzyme, Proctor and Gamble and International Paper. Bradley also got money from Clinton lawyer Robert Bennett,

A senate staffer said that Feingold thinks Bradley’s “one of the biggest hypocrites in the race.”

former Clinton official Roger Altman and Dennis Farley, a senior economist for the Federal Reserve Board.

Al Gore laughably elasticized the truth when he claimed to have “invented the Internet.” But Bradley himself is telling tales on more tedious subjects. Recently, the former senator claimed to have authored the 1986 of the federal tax code. Now this feat is hardly something a normal person would brag about in public gatherings that are not restricted to CPAs and mutual fund managers. But even many accountants are puzzled by Bradley’s reference to the bill as “a model of simplifying the tax code”. “Tax simplification act it wasn’t,” a Washington, D.C. account-

ant told CounterPunch. “From the point of view of our business, we could do with a reform act like that every year.”

The accountant and his colleagues then merrily reminisced about the bountiful loopholes opened up by the act. In the midst of our discussion another client of the firm wandered by. Informed of the topic, she mentioned that she had dated Bradley briefly at Princeton: “He was really dull.” It’s true. Bradley is a truly dull man and the Bradley household scarcely a salon of good cheer. An ashen-faced Friend of CounterPunch describes fleeing the Bradley manse after a two-day stay in which the former senator immersed himself in health care stats while Ernestine lectured the guest on the novels of Herman Broch. Nor were alcohol or tobacco permitted as salves against the oppressive ennui.

What’s strange is that Bradley’s boast of writing the 1986 tax act is easily disputed by one of Bradley’s best friends from his days in the senate, the box-wine lecher Bob Packwood. Packwood chaired the Senate Finance Committee during those years and famously wrote the outlines of the new tax law on a bar napkin at a pub near the Hill. As Rep. Peter DeFazio, the Oregon Democrat, quipped: “For every loophole that act shut down, it opened 10 more.”

While George W. Bush speaks of “compassionate conservatism,” Bill Bradley is constantly invoking the phrase “progress with compassion”. Compassion for whom? For Bradley, it seems to refer to the corporations and financial houses bankrolling his campaign. CP

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At Last: The Straight Poop on Bill Bradley