

EDITORIAL

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As the institutional leadership of this nation creeps closer and closer to finally passing a minimum wage increase for hard-working, low-paid Americans, JaxFax would like to take a look at the development of the minimum wage/"living wage" movement, which illuminates some important truths about our political system.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

A Living Wage

First of all, the drive for a minimum wage increase was "bottom-up, not top-down." Newt Gingrich had his Army; but in this case, the people had their own army--over 80% of all voters support a minimum wage increase.

But because our political elites take most of their cues from the monied special interests--and here JaxFax is not talking about just the right-wingers--the institutional leadership of the country ignored the strong public support for a living wage for years.

After all, to the 1% of Americans who own 42% of the nation's wealth--and who make most of the big campaign contributions--living wages are not a major concern. And to the 500,000 families (1/2 of 1% of all U.S. families), who own 29% of America's wealth, living wages are a minor issue.

Not so for the maids who change their bedsheets; the gardeners who plant the flowers at their mansions; the cooks who prepare their daily meals--to these working people, and to millions just like them, living wages can make the difference between holding a family together or plunging deeper into poverty and despair. And that's the second key point--this issue connects with real people.

The truth is, most poor people are not on welfare--they work every day. Most poor people are white, young, female, children. At \$4.25 per hour, these working poor cannot even maintain and income above the poverty line. The hard-working Americans are playing by the rules, but the game is stacked against them. Raising the minimum wage to provide a living income for families is the least we can do to level the playing field of opportunity in this nation.

There are a variety of local activists forcing this living wage issue onto the public policy agenda, including New Party, ACORN, IAF, SEIU, Teamsters, CWA, and other key unions. In many cities and counties, these activists are successfully organizing to win the approval of their city and county councils, and in Baltimore and Milwaukee have already succeeded. In other key cities and states, these activist groups are taking the case for a living wage directly to the voters using local ballot initiative laws to place a series of living wage initiatives on this November's ballot.

The idea behind the living wage is simple, and just--any corporation that

receives a public subsidy from a city or state should be required to pay its workers a living wage--at least enough money per hour to bring a family of four up to the poverty level.

The NRC stands in support of the living wage. JaxFax encourages Rainbow supporters to assist the passage of these living wage legislative and ballot initiatives in the following cities and states: Chicago; Houston; Minneapolis/St. Paul; Denver; Albuquerque; Washington, D.C.; New Orleans; Boston; Los Angeles; New York City; Jersey City; Nassau County; California; Missouri; Montana; and Oregon.

A third point concerning the living wage idea, a point which goes to the heart of the public policy agenda in this nation--our ideas are often popular! An increase in the minimum wage is supported by the vast majority of Americans, despite opposition from the GOP leadership, elite economists, and powerful business interests.

We can push our own progressive agenda on many issues, and the voters will pass it! Our side has done this successfully in recent years with campaign finance reform, bypassing a

Congress gridlocked by special interest money and going directly to the voters. This year we can do the same with the living wage issue.

The pundits in recent weeks have given much credit to Senators Kennedy and Daschle, and to Labor Secretary Reich, for their leadership on the minimum wage increase. They deserve credit. To a large extent, however, the living wage is the brainchild of Jackson '88 Labor Desk Coordinator, and current New Party head organizer, Dan Cantor. For literally years now, Cantor has been making a consistent argument over and over, which is being put into action in these ballot initiatives, and has thus crept up the ladder from the grassroots to the Democrats in Congress!

Cantor's argument had several parts:

- the minimum/living wage issue is a popular and populist one for our side;
- by using the initiative, we can win success by bypassing legislative bodies, which then increases overall political pressure on key issues;
- ballot initiatives on progressive economic issues can reconnect with working class voters, increase voter turnout on our side, change campaign agendas, and redefine the political landscape.

Dan Cantor is correct. And we must not forget that. Our public policy ideas are often more popular with real people than are those of the right-wingers. Unfortunately, they usually enter the struggle with confidence; we often enter it with uncertainty. This must change. The rightward cycle is ending. Our ideas can win.

perspectives

Relax, Regroup, Even Repeat If Necessary - But Don't Retreat

"I'm trying to stay with the plan, man", my usually highly-organized neighbor confided in me. "But doesn't it seem to you that this past year has been far beyond the ordinary in wear and tear on the human spirit?"

How could I not help but agree? Or not go along with his firmly announced intention to "lay back relax, and maybe get into some of that 'good summer reading' you suggested."

As with the case in many recent conversations, I have marveled at how many of us -- black, white, gray

or grizzle, as my mother used to say -- have forcefully expressed this desire to slow the pace and regroup. And this is not happening at the end of the calendar year, or at the end of the Federal fiscal year, nor at the end of some great agricultural cycle (harvest time). This almost universal expression of a great ennui or weariness of spirit would seem to coincide exactly with the advent of the summer break in the education cycle.

No, 'it is not in the stars, dear Brutus', but it does appear that we have joined our children and youth in gaining a temporary refuge or hiatus from offending pressures or regimens. "I feel your pain" (smiles). "I feel as though I've had an undeserved whipping" commented one beleaguered reader. "I was beat over the head all year by that big time establishment media which sought to make a new holy grail out of the O.J. Simpson trial. And then, when their grandiose, billion-dollar theatrical production fizzled out, no conviction, no lynching, 'they' belligerently went after the jury, and then an entire race--rather than the system which, encourages such farces."

"Extremely well-stated", I told this person who is very active in community affairs, but I still had to get in my usual reminder that it is all very well to relax somewhat but also to remember that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." And I point out that a willful, if not recreant establishment media put most of its personnel, resources and research into that year-long Simpson

theatrical production while ignoring critical issues which are vital to us all, have been allowed to grow out of control. So it is more at "regroup" than "relax".

While many congresspersons and other politicians were simultaneously screaming their concern with crime and the right to bear arms (almost any kind), a rising tide of radical right wing populism was pushing the development of self-styled militias and armed camps on

a nationwide basis. Belatedly, a still somewhat hesitant media informs us that 'yes, these people have now reached a state of

armed insurgency such that they not only trash their neighbors and local law enforcement, but the vaunted FBI as well.

The growing strength, interstate organization and capacity for violence on the part of these groups, and their threat to the basic fabric of our society, could well have been constrained by a timely intervention had the media assigned just half the resources it devoted to the Simpson trial. And there are many of us who wonder what other ugly surprises await us, events and issues that have not received that glaring light that media have always promised as "guardians of our liberty."

As the toll of black churches burned to the ground rises each week in a painful reminder of the old adage, "the South shall rise again," bitter black ministers who deplore the relative disinterest of both the media and federal authorities. One despairing deacon was driven to a most 'unchristian' thought, "when will they act, when they start burning synagogues?" (Remember the 'Deacons For Defense?').

On a recent talk show, I heard a quote that sounded very familiar, though it was not attributed. I looked it up.

"Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both."--Frederick Douglass.

"West Indian Emancipation 4 August, 1857."



By Professor Mckinley Burt

Vantage Point

The Ballot As A Weapon In The Black Freedom Struggle (Part II)

Ron Daniels

Up from the dark days of the Post Reconstruction and Southern apartheid, Black America can now boast of nearly 10,000 Black elected officials (BEO's) in this country. This is a remarkable testimony to the power of the ballot in the hands of Black folks. Despite this remarkable achievement, however, there is considerable disillusionment in Black America, particularly among Black poor and working people and young people about the value of the ballot in the Black Freedom Struggle. Some eight million African Americans are not even registered to vote. And, among those who are registered, disenchantment and apathy have resulted in a pattern of low voter turn-out especially in local and state elections.

To the proponents of Black voter participation this is an alarming development. A typical reaction to the phenomenon of low voter participation is to take those who do not vote

to task for betraying the long and bloody struggle to secure the right to vote. It is often assumed that those who do not vote are simply uninformed and ignorant of the importance of voting within the American body politic. For many within the ranks of Black poor and working people, however, the quality of life has not significantly changed as result of the thousands of BEO's who now occupy various public offices within the system. Indeed, the quality of life for those at the bottom within the Black Nation has actually deteriorated over the last two decades. There is a prevalent feeling among the Black poor that there is no direct relationship between voting and a change in the quality of their lives. Many young African Americans see a racist and exploitative system and question whether it is possible to change that system by participating in and becoming a part of the system.

This disillusionment with voting/

electoral politics is compounded by the perception that large numbers of BEO's have simply become traditional "politicians," who are disconnected from grassroots communities; politicians who have succumbed to the self aggrandizing vote trading, deal making and corruption which Black political empowerment was supposed to change. Finally, there is the view that neither the Democratic or the Republican party really represents the interests of the masses of Black people, that the Democrats take Black people for granted and the Republicans are a repugnant alternative. This is the rather troubling state of affairs as it relates to Black Voter participation.

In my judgement, though it is a mistake to rely on electoral politics exclusively, the ballot is still a potent weapon which must be used in the Black Freedom Struggle. For the ballot to be the potent weapon which Black America needs to advance its interest, however, Black voter mobi-

lization/participation must be tied to a vision of social change and social transformation. There must be a clear sense that voting is about transforming an oppressive system and changing the quality of life for the masses of Black poor and working people and other oppressed people.

Voting must not be reduced to a mundane ritual of replacing White faces with Black faces in old places. There is a need for visionary new Black political leadership to rise up from the community and community struggle; a leadership that will remain rooted in the community and committed to social justice and social change. Time and time again Black folks have demonstrated that they will vote for Black candidates whom they feel are genuinely dedicated to changing the system and the quality of their lives.

Update Of The Kent Case

Will Judge Don Londer And Ed Peterson Follow The Laws?

BY JOHN SALTER, FRAUD INVESTIGATOR

For the past several years, I have been investigating the theft of Janette Kent's \$35,000,000 estate.

As a fraud investigator, I have investigated many cases of theft and fraud across our nation. However, never before have I seen such overwhelming and obvious evidence of theft and fraud as is now documented in the theft of Kent's properties.

The evidence is overwhelming that Milton Brown stole Ms. Kent's estate through obvious forgeries and then compromised Norm Lindstedt, Kent's former attorney and the personal representative of Kent's estate. The evidence is clear and convincing that Lindstedt breached his contract with Ms. Kent which states he cannot settle Ms. Kent's estate without her consent. However, Lindstedt entered into three secret agreements with Brown to "settle" Kent's estate for approx. 2% of its value.

Yet Ms. Kent has been denied a trial on this obvious theft for the past seven years. Why is that? Many people conclude that this is irrefutable evidence that the Oregon judges involved are corrupt and have been bribed by Milton Brown, whom the evidence proves beyond any doubt, stole Ms. Kent's estate.

However, Ms. Kent believes it is

possible that some of the judges may have been misled by Lindstedt's lies and misrepresentations instead of being involved in the Brown-Lindstedt conspiracy to steal Ms. Kent's estate and deny her rights to a trial. The question many people are asking is: are these judges part of the fraud or were they defrauded by the fraud?

We will know the answer to that question soon. Ms. Kent has filed a motion before the Presiding Judge of Multnomah County, Judge Donald Londer. In the motion, Ms. Kent asked Judge Londer to assign her Petition to Remove the "PR", Lindstedt to a judge who will hear it. This Petition has never been heard before and must be heard as a matter of law. According to ORS 113.195(4): "When grounds for removal of a personal representative appear to exist, the court, on its own motion, or on the petition of any interested person, shall order the personal representative to appear and show cause why the personal representative should not be removed." Judge Londer responded by letter to Ms. Kent that he has given the motion to Judge Elizabeth Welch. Judge Welch should either hear this motion herself, or assign it to a judge who will. We are still waiting to hear from Judge Welch regarding this motion. If Ms. Kent is denied a hearing of her Petition to Remove the "PR",

Lindstedt, it would seriously implicate Judge Londer and Judge Welch in the Brown-Lindstedt conspiracy.

Ms. Kent has also filed a Breach of Contract case against Lindstedt before Judge Edwin Peterson's Court. Judge Peterson has the evidence proving beyond any doubt that Lindstedt has breached his contract with Ms. Kent. Judge Peterson also has the evidence that Ms. Kent's Breach of Contract has never been heard previously, nor could it have been heard in other courts and should be heard in his court.

The major evidence of this obvious theft and fraud has been condensed into three books: the Summary Of The Evidence Book, the Witnesses' Affidavit Book and the Fraud Evidence book. Also there is a Appraisal Book proving the value of Ms. Kent's estate exceeds \$35,000,000. The judges now have these books. If you would like to see this obvious and overwhelming evidence for yourself, they are on file with the Multnomah County Court in two cases. They are on file in the Probate Court, case no. 8506-91295 which is the case now before Judge Welch and they are on file in the Kent v. Lindstedt Breach of Contract case,

case no. 9407-05244.

This evidence has also been displayed in various television shows and has been discussed on various radio shows and newspapers. Indeed, and the evidence of theft and fraud is so obvious, millions of people, including various agencies, are following Ms. Kent's cases as a test case to test the integrity of our judiciary. Clearly, the judges should follow their own statutes, the laws, the constitution and rule in accordance with the evidence. If they don't, the only possible conclusion is that they are co-conspirators in possibly the largest, most obvious theft in our history.

This is a matter of grave concern for all Oregonians and all Americans. If Ms. Kent can't get a trail with this kind of evidence, Who can? If these judges do not follow the laws, they should be indicted by a Grand Jury and removed from office. We will follow with an update regarding any further developments in this case. If you would like to help and/or desire further information, please call (503) 727-2484.

Editor's note: These are not the views of the Portland Observer Newspaper. These are the views of John Salter only.

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