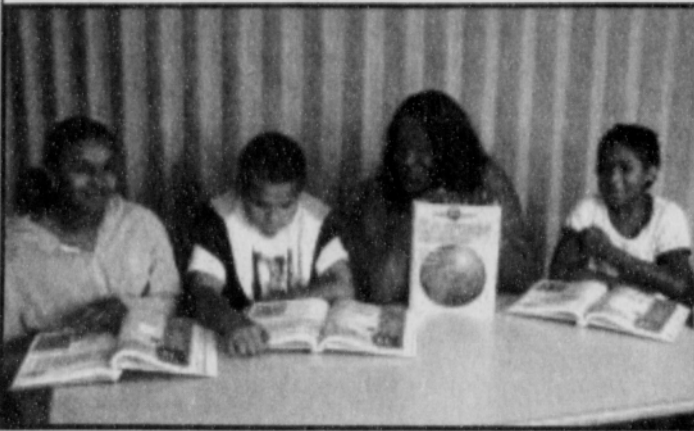


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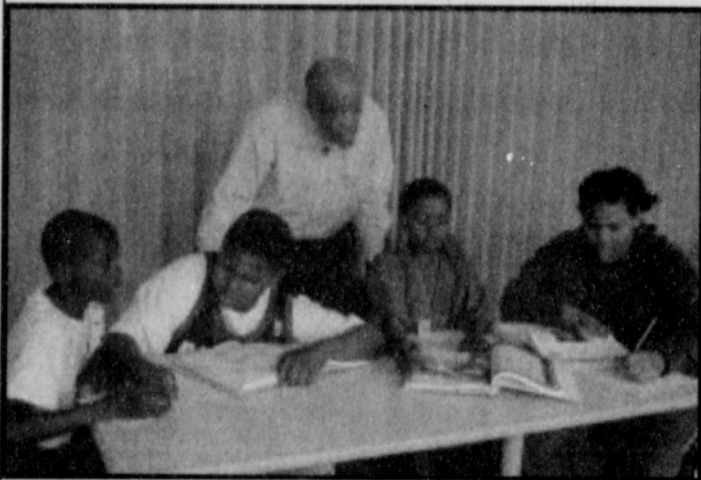
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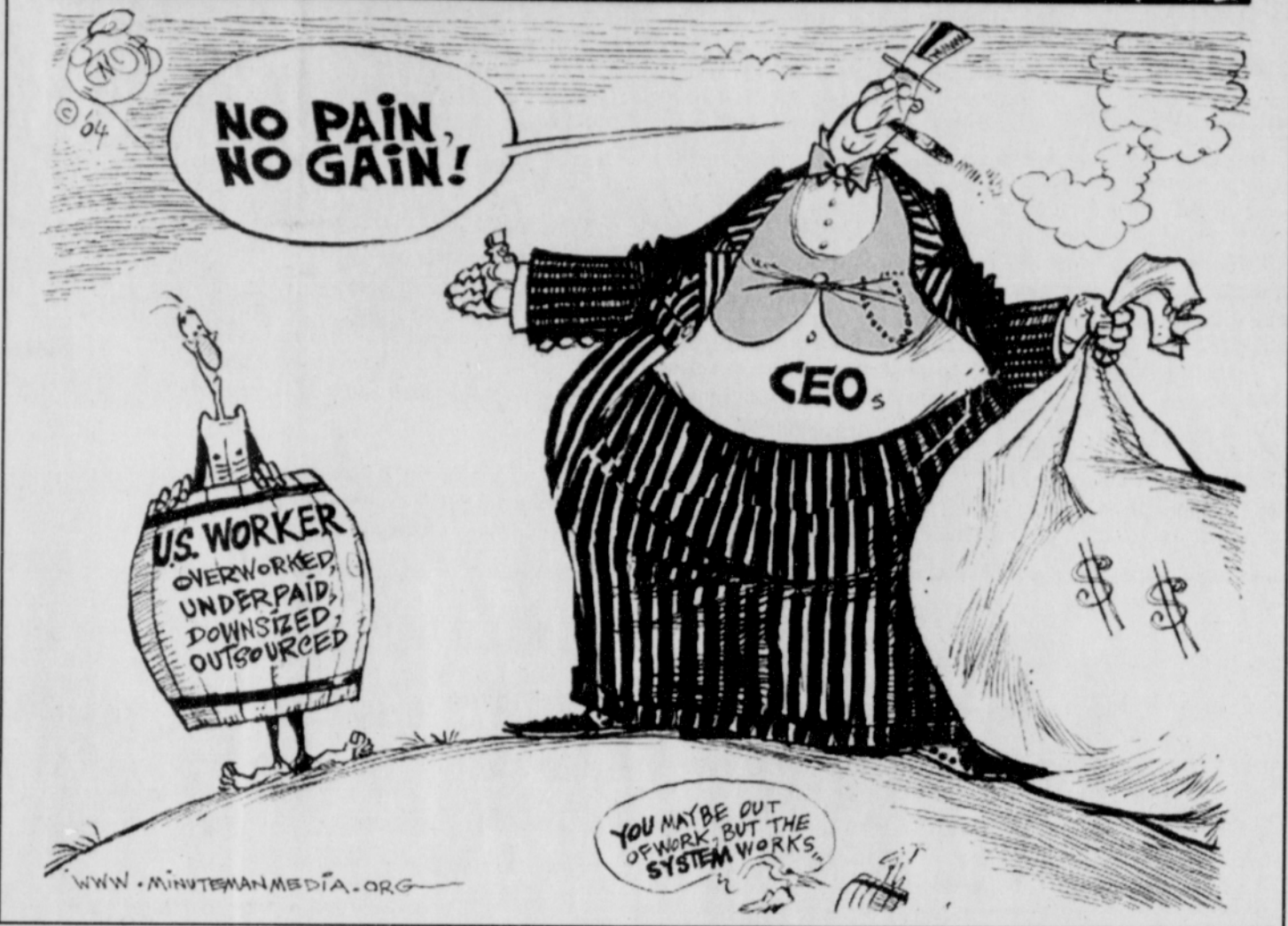
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## OPINION

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**NEWS ITEM: CEO PAY UP 480% FROM 1980 TO 2003, WHILE WORKERS GET SQUEEZED**



## African-American Voters Discovered

Disenfranchisement of the black vote catches fire

BY GREG PALAST

Like Christopher Columbus blinking in shock at first seeing an American Indian, John Kerry has just discovered African-American voters.

On Thursday, Kerry landed at the NAACP convention, stepped off his slow-moving campaign boat and announced that he was exploring for one million missing black voters.

Let me explain — because the New York Times won't. In the 2000 elections, 1.9 million ballots were cast which were never counted — "spoiled" is the technical term. Ballots don't spoil because they are left out of the fridge. There's always a technical reason: a stray mark, or my favorite, from Gadsden County, Fla., writing in Al Gore's name instead of checking a box.

According to data from the US Civil Rights Commission and the Harvard University Law School Civil Rights Project, about half the nation's spoil ballots — one million — were cast by black folk. Just as African American communities get the worst schools, the worst hospitals, they also get dumped with the worst voting machines which eat, miscalculate, mangle and void ballots.

Poof! A million black votes gone, zapped, vanished.

And the nasty secret is that for years, that suited many white leaders of local and state Democratic organizations — Zell Miller of Georgia is a case in point — who feared black voters as much as Republicans.

But change is coming, and not because John Kerry and the men who think for him have changed. Change is coming because African-American leaders are getting a little uppity about the Democratic Party taking or leaving the African-American voter as the mood and

Just when Edwards thought he could have a sip of coffee, Jackson required him to watch the segment of our BBC television special, "Bush Family Fortunes," with the latest analysis on the non-count of black votes in Florida. In the 2000 race, 95,000 African-American votes were dumped in the Florida swamps, marked as spoiled.

Edwards, succumbing to hunger, caffeine deprivation and Rev. Jackson's intense interrogation, caved in and promised to take the message of the missing black votes

Capitol and denounced the Republican Party for stealing the election in Florida. For telling this truth, she was censured by a straight-up party-line vote by the House of Representatives and her remarks stricken.

Sen. Kerry is no Corrine Brown. The man who would be president is first trying out the 'D' word in front of the friendly natives at the NAACP. But still, it's a step: mentioning out loud the massive, systematic disenfranchisement of the black vote.

But the real change won't come until Kerry can say the 'D' word in front of say, a gathering of the members of his wife's country club, and until he confronts the boys holding the electoral lynching ropes in both parties.

I have a dream. I imagine John Kerry taking this message to the floor of the convention next week, proclaiming, "Three decades after Martin Luther King's murder, one million African Americans cast ballots never counted. This will not stand!" Imagine it: at that moment, for the first time in a generation, the Democratic Party will have nominated a Democrat.

Greg Palast is an investigative reporter from London. He is known for his reports on the theft of the election in Florida and the connections between the Bush family and the Bin Ladins which form the basis for Michael Moore's latest film "Fahrenheit 9/11."

*Change is coming because African-American leaders are getting a little uppity about the Democratic Party taking or leaving the African-American voter as the mood and arithmetic pleases.*

arithmetic pleases.

Here's how Sen. Kerry got the message. Two weeks ago, when I was in Chicago, Jesse Jackson asked me to join him for breakfast at the Marriott Hotel. To my surprise, he'd also invited Senator John Edwards. Jackson had made copies of my editorial for the San Francisco Chronicle on the missing one million votes . . . and wouldn't let the wannabe Veep touch his bagel until he'd read every word.

to the white side of his party.

Congresswoman Corrine Brown joined us. When she read the story and saw the film, she was ready to spit bullets. She was especially upset that British television covered the story while, in the USA, the black story was blacked out.

The film clip would get the Congresswoman in hot water. This past Thursday, in Washington, she again watched a preview of the BBC film, marched down to the

## Letters to the Editor City Bureaus Outdated

I hold no position on the merits of police reform on the City Council's agenda. However, I do believe that members of the council should have the right, at any time, to submit an ordinance or resolution or whatever on any topic.

Our city needs a city manager or strong mayor with commissioners elected at large but required to live in defined districts similar to the Portland School Board.

The current candidates for mayor and commissioner should immediately put this issue on their public speaking agendas.

This business of "you don't mess with my bureaus and I won't mess with yours" is outdated, counterproductive and should come to an end. Making good public policy is every commissioner's business.

Richard Ellmyer  
North Portland

## Make Healthy Choices

Another study by the U.S. National Institutes of Health has called for a further reduction in the tolerable level of cholesterol. The guidelines were endorsed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology.

So what's new? Health authorities have been cautioning us for years to replace cholesterol-laden meat and dairy products with vegetables, fruits, and grains, which contain no cholesterol.

How many more studies will it take? How many more people must die of heart disease and stroke, our nation's top killers, before consumers get the message?

Eating a cholesterol-free diet is a snap these days. Every supermarket carries a rich variety of veggie burgers, soy dogs, soy-based lunch meats, microwave-ready dinners, dairy-free ice cream and other desserts, and of course, a huge selection of vegetables and fruits.

We have the means to lead a healthy, productive life. All we need is the will.

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