

The 2004 Election: Cancer or the Plague - You Get to Choose!

This election year, the choice will be between Republican Bush, a millionaire Yale alumnus and member of the secret elite 'Skull and Bones' society, and Democrat Kerry, a millionaire Yale alumnus and member of the secret elite 'Skull and Bones' society. Now this fact reveals a tiny bit of the truth about class society: for the vast majority of people in the U.S. - members of the working class - "democracy" means choosing between two members of the parasitic non-working elite - the capitalist class - men and women of privilege and great wealth, who exploit the rest of us.

Bush's wealth is well-known, but Kerry's official campaign page is strangely silent about his elite background. The Kerry campaign never talks about Kerry's \$750,000 speed boat (reportedly paid for in cash), the Scaramouche, nor does it ever mention the palatial spa Kerry owns in Aspen. Kerry castigates Bush for "special favors for special interests," but Kerry, like Bush, has refused to accept voluntary campaign spending limits and also reportedly collected more PAC money from special interest groups than anyone else in the U.S. Senate for the past six years.

While Kerry's campaign page talks about Kerry's "reputation for independence" and his "making tough choices on difficult issues," in fact, Kerry has been eager to support several of Bush's priorities: like nearly all the Senate Democrats, Kerry voted in favor of the Patriot Act, which has seriously compromised civil liberties in the U.S.; he voted in favor of Bush's unending war against Iraq, a country that never attacked the U.S.

When the Kerry campaign page says that Kerry "has worked to address children's issues," it does not specify that Kerry was a supporter of Clinton's welfare "reform," which ended welfare as an entitlement for children of the poor in this country (this has led to an astonishing increase in child poverty, which in the wealthiest country in the world now stands at 18 percent). Kerry has reportedly boasted about his support for that measure. He also voted for NAFTA, the "free-trade" agreement that has devastated U.S. jobs and driven conditions for Mexican workers into the gutter.

Now in his fourth term in the U.S. Senate, Kerry has been a spectacularly unimpressive legislator, having organized the passage of just 7 bills, out of 317 introduced during 20 years. One of the bills he helped to pass was Plan Colombia (1999), which among other things involves the sending of military "advisers" to the brutal right-wing government (9 of 10 trade unionists killed around the world are from Colombia), and authorizes the chemical defoliation of rain forest. Under this Kerry legislation,

325,000 acres of Colombian territory (another country that never attacked the U.S.) have now been sprayed with toxins in a phony "war against drugs", while cocaine production in that country has increased by 11 percent.

It is reported that Senator Kerry is connected to Enron, and to Enron's bank Citigroup through his multi-millionaire wife, whose Heinz Environmental Defense Fund has Ken Lay on its board of directors. Researcher Michael Donnelly reports that "Enron's bank, Citigroup, has been a major contributor to Kerry's various campaigns. In 1995, Kerry cast the deciding vote to override Clinton's veto of the very bill used by Enron and Citigroup to conduct their now well-known consumer rip-offs." So much for clean government.

So we face an election in which both major candidates enjoy unbelievable wealth and power, and both support U.S. military aggression overseas and austerity for the already impoverished at home. The Democrats and Republicans are two sides of the same coin. Both candidates represent the parties of the big-business capitalist class, and no matter who wins, it will be a government by and for the rich. So why does the AFL-CIO continue to support the Democrats, who have consistently betrayed working people for decades? The reason is clear: the "labor aristocracy" has made a nice living out of cozying up to the bosses; of holding back and at times openly betraying the interests and just demands of the rank and file workers. With the unions under attack like never before, the need for an independent working class party is more acute than ever. (The proportion of U.S. workers who belong to labor unions continued a 20-year decline in 2003 as union membership dropped to 12.9 percent from 13.3 percent in 2002).

Many people have an "anyone but Bush" approach to the elections. Many support Kerry only because of his alleged "electability". But anyone who works for a living can be sure that under Kerry, those whose interests have always prevailed in American society - the bosses, the bankers and the landlords - will continue to prosper and rule. In 20 years in the U.S. Senate, Kerry has never once challenged their rule, and he certainly will not do so if he is elected President. Bush or Kerry, the Republicans or the Democrats: these are not serious choices for the vast majority of working Americans. Choosing a "lesser evil" is not "democracy". The super-rich elite control both parties; working people urgently need a political party of our own - a mass party of labor based on the unions, with a socialist program, to fight for our interests against Bush, Kerry and all the other greedy exploiters the Democrats and Republicans uniformly represent.



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