

# Labor/Community ALLIANCE

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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 11



DECEMBER 1998

## Support the Holiday Season of Conscience Campaign

A local coalition of labor, religious, and community groups has emerged in Fresno to end sweatshop labor. They are working together on the Holiday Season of Conscience campaign sponsored nationally by the People of Faith Network and the National Labor Committee.

This campaign is about transparency in the global economy, about throwing open the locked factory gates, tearing down the barbed wire and removing the armed guards. It is about letting in the light of day, so it is harder to abuse children and operate sweatshops.

The campaign is focusing on Wal-Mart, because it is the largest retailer in the world. If Wal-Mart can be moved to do the right thing, then the entire industry will change. Wal-Mart and the other multinationals refuse to release to the American people even the list and addresses of the factories they use around the world to make the goods we purchase. The corporations say we have no right to this information. Even the President of the United States could not find out from Wal-Mart where it manufactures its goods.

Yet, it is our right to know in which countries and factories, under what human rights conditions and at what wages

the products we purchase are made. In the global economy, we must have the right to know that 60 percent of the \$180 billion a year we spend on clothing, 80 percent of the toys and sporting goods, and 90 percent of the shoes we purchase are imports. We live in a global economy.

Imagine: In just the first 10 months of 1997, American

companies imported one billion garments made in China—nearly four garments for every man, woman and child in the U.S. Yet what do we know about who made this clothing, and under what conditions?

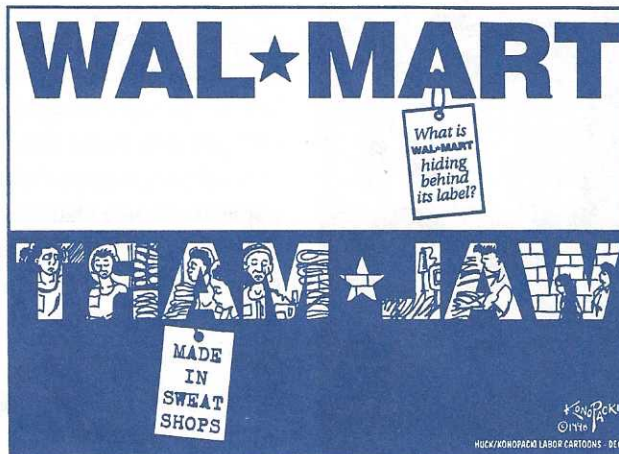
The companies do not want us to know that our clothing was sewn in China by young women, 17 to 25 years old (when they are fired as “too old”), forced to work seven days a week, often past midnight, for 12 to 28 cents

an hour, with no benefits. Or that the women are housed in crowded, dirty dormitories, 15 to a room, and fed a thin rice and gruel. Or that the workers are kept under 24-hour surveillance and can be fired for even discussing factory conditions.

Wal-Mart claims to have a “buy American” policy, an “unprecedented commitment to purchase American goods,” that is, until you reach the small print, which reads, “when-ever pricing is comparable to goods made offshore.” How can American workers compete with 9 cent-an-hour wages in Indonesia?

This is not a boycott. It is an attempt to defend jobs in the developing world, and in the United States, jobs with dignity, under conditions that respect human rights and pay a

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### The purpose

of Labor/Community Alliance  
is threefold: (1) to strengthen and unite the  
labor movement and the progressive commu-  
nity in the Central San Joaquin Valley  
through information sharing,  
(2) to promote and defend the rights  
of local working people, and (3) to  
help organize the unorganized.  
This publication is printed monthly and  
includes a calendar of events.

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## Letters to the Editor

Thank you for your piece by Larry Langford on Proposition 5. That was the most informative article I'd read on it. Good work!

Lucille Wheaton

Fresno, CA

The following letter was written by a prisoner in Pleasant Valley State Prison, Coalinga. To protect him from possible reprisal, we are withholding his name.

On Oct. 23, Maria Telesco of Death Penalty Focus was interviewed [on the KFCF Radio program, "Street Heat"]. She discussed her work and activism around the general issue of prisoners' rights and, more specifically, the efforts of DPF to render some service to those who have been sentenced to die.

As a prisoner-of-conscience, I am especially receptive toward any entity, individual, or organization who seeks and acts to hold at bay those forces that would otherwise move to smash us out of existence. It is my honest belief that without the work and devotion of those like Maria, DPF, Critical Resistance, and all the other brave men and women who stand to ensure that the "watchers" are being watched, our existence here would be a thousand times more precarious than it already is.

#### Editor:

I am disappointed that a letter or petition signed by all the union members living in Fresno was not sent to the Bee telling them that reinstatement of the person fired would be hooked to our cancellation of the *Fresno Bee* to our homes. **We can get our news from someone else!** We could all switch our subscriptions to the *San Francisco Chronicle* or another paper of choice that honors unions!

The Bee would listen to us if we sent them a petition signed by hundreds of [union] members in the Valley, and it could even get the Bee to cover the union causes in the Valley better.

Esther Ulrich



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# CSUF faculty struggles for fair contract

The campus at CSUF seems like a tranquil enough place, but there is trouble brewing. The professors, who are represented by the California Faculty Association (CFA), have been working without a contract since June 30 of this year.

Some of the issues involved are:

- ❁ Faculty salaries have fallen more than 11 percent behind comparable universities.
- ❁ CSU faculty members are expected to teach a 33 percent larger course load than faculty at comparable universities.
- ❁ Average class sizes are up nearly 15 percent.
- ❁ On the Fresno campus, we have lost 120 tenure-track positions.
- ❁ Statewide, the CSU has lost 1200 positions.
- ❁ Department budgets have not grown with costs.
- ❁ CSUF is at least \$30 million behind on deferred maintenance—and it shows.

- ❁ The system continues to become more dependent on vulnerable and underpaid part-time faculty and “visiting” lecturers.

The CFA bargaining team has been stalemated by an impasse in negotiations, with the CSU administration offering a meager 2.5 percent in general salary increases and demanding that department chairs be turned into managers.

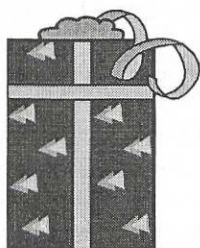


Lynn Jacobsson and Su Kapoor support quality education and a fair contract at rally on the CSUF campus November 18.

Chancellor Reed is likely to continue his intransigence until the faculty demonstrate in an active way that they will not accept a continuing degradation of the campus and teaching conditions.

The rally held November 18 at the campus is an example of the determination needed by CSUF faculty to win a fair contract.

For more information about the situation at CSUF, contact the CFA office at 278-4821.



## Mark your calendar!

Saturday, December 12

10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Holiday Craft Faire at First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Avenue. Admission is free. For further information, or if you're interested in having a booth or table at the event, please call 266-4979.

### Holiday Season of Conscience, cont. from page 1

living wage. Wal-Mart could clearly afford to do the right thing. Last year the company's operating profit was \$7.6 billion, and the Walton family is now worth \$50 billion!

The anti-sweatshop coalition in Fresno is asking you to do three things:

- ❁ Attend a rally in front of the Wal-Mart at 3680 W. Shaw in Fresno on Thursday, Dec. 10, from 12 to 1 P.M.
- ❁ Send a letter to Wal-Mart CEO David Glass. (Call 449-0893 for a sample letter.)  
Mr. David Glass, CEO  
Wal-Mart Corporation  
702 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bentonville, AK 72716

- ❁ Ask your church, synagogue, labor organization or community group to talk about this campaign at a meeting and to include an article about the Holiday Season of Conscience Campaign in its newsletter.

This campaign is endorsed locally by the Central Labor Council of Fresno, Madera, Tulare, & Kings County AFL-CIO, Fresno Metro Ministry, the Labor/Community Alliance, The Interfaith Alliance, Fresno Metro Ministry, Sun Mountain, Fresno Center for Nonviolence, and the Fresno/Telpaneca Sister City Association. For more information, call the Labor/Community Alliance at 226-0477.

**"They only look like children; they're really malnourished adults."** Wal-Mart Contractor



## Help needed for hurricane victims

### Mitch damages Nicaraguan sister city

Reports from Nicaragua indicate that Fresno's sister city, Telpaneca, suffered extensive damage when hurricane Mitch struck last month. Radio Ocotol reported that:

- ⇒ 183 homes were completely destroyed. Another 62 have been partially destroyed.
- ⇒ 348 families (made up of 1,724 individuals) are homeless. They're currently being housed in 8 shelters.
- ⇒ All 3 major bridges connecting Telpaneca to other outlying communities have been washed out.
- ⇒ The government has declared the school year finished.
- ⇒ 95% of the bean harvest has been lost. Corn and sorghum harvests have also been affected.
- ⇒ Los Lirios, a "suburb" of Telpaneca, has been especially hard hit: the entire community is being housed in a coffee processing warehouse.

The Fresno/Telpaneca Sister City Association is responding to this disaster by raising emergency funds for humanitarian relief. The greatest danger that now threatens the community is the outbreak of epidemics such as cholera, malaria, dengue fever, and respiratory disease. All donations received will be sent to Telpaneca and used for medical supplies, desperately needed in the aftermath of the hurricane. The generosity of the progressive community in Fresno to help our neighbors in Central America has always been inspirational.

This sister city group has done wonderful work in Nicaragua. They currently sponsor a scholarship project helping students continue their education. In the past they have helped build a school and sent tons of medical supplies. Overhead costs are extremely low so just about every dollar you send actually is used for the purpose intended. The Labor/Community Alliance encourages you to send your hurricane relief contribution to:

The Fresno/Telpaneca Sister City Association  
P.O. Box 4496  
Fresno, CA 93744

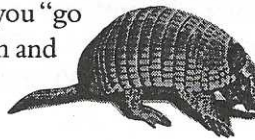
## Class warfare and dead armadillos

### Book review by Pam Whalen

In his recent book, *There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road but Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos*, Jim Hightower uses the ultimate weapon in class warfare: humor. He totally demolishes the corporate myth that Americans are conservative (i.e., favor more wealth and power for the rich). As others have done before him (e.g., Michael Moore and Holly Sklar), he describes how truly obscene the corporatocracy has become and how complicit both political parties are in the process.

Hightower challenges workers, activists, and anyone who cares to take on corporations, the rich and their apologists

the politicians and to fight back. Since corporate America long ago declared war on the "average American" working class and middle class alike, it is high time we fought back. He advises us when you "go hunting you don't throw down your gun and hug the grizzly." This seemingly simple advice has apparently eluded legions of politicians (the Dumbocrats as Michael Moore calls them) and, sadly, labor leaders and others, as they have embraced the corporate agenda, or cowed before it.



This book is as quotable as a Shakespeare play: "We all do better when we all do better," the title quote and scores of others. Belly laughs and outrage abound, as Hightower spoofs the corporations, the media and the politicians. Hightower also rings in for common sense and hope as he tours small towns, churches, and grassroots fights against polluters. Hightower gets us mad and makes us see that radicalism and activism—standing up to corporate thieves, standing up for workers, and challenging the rich and powerful—are as American as apple pie. Read this book and laugh, howl, and fight back—smarter and happier.

## MAI: Why should we care?

### Excerpts from AFL-CIO statement on the MAI,

### Multilateral Agreement on Investment, Oct. 14, 1998

Since 1995, the US government has been leading an effort by 29 of the world's richest nations to negotiate a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). Negotiated under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the MAI was scheduled to be completed in April of 1998. Growing popular opposition forced a temporary suspension of negotiations, which are scheduled to resume in October 1998. The principle objective of the MAI is to strengthen and expand international rules that elevate the mobility of capital and the rights of investors above all other considerations. In this system, worker rights, environmental protection, and necessary government regulation of the economy take a back seat to the interests of private capital. The AFL-CIO rejects this model as irredeemably flawed, harming workers across the globe while enriching the financial sector. At a time when the current system is increasingly being questioned, it is folly to lock in rules that only serve to perpetuate this system.

We are at an important historic turning point. The expert wisdom of a few years ago—that a deregulated world market would create prosperity for all—is now discredited. We have an opportunity to rethink and reshape the rules of the global economy. We should ensure that the global economy of the future is one built on a solid foundation of democratic, sustainable, and egalitarian growth, not unlimited profit for a few corporate giants.

The problems with the MAI draft include:

- **Labor Rights**—The labor rights provisions in the MAI are unacceptable, consisting only of weak hortatory language that imposes no effective penalties for violation of internationally recognized labor rights and no meaningful obligation to enforce existing laws.

(continued on p. 8)



# Calendar of Events ~ December 1998

## Tuesday, December 1: World AIDS Day

*AIDS Day Event*, 6 P.M., CSUF Satellite Student Union. The theme for this year's event is "Be a Force for Change."

*The San Joaquin Valley Exchange Works* has been circulating a statewide petition demanding that District Attorney Ed Hunt drop the charges against the volunteers who were arrested in May. The signed petitions will be presented to Hunt on Tuesday, December 1, World AIDS Day, at 10 A.M., at the D.A.'s office, 2200 Tulare St. A press conference will follow. Please show up to show your support. Call 445-9111 or 383-2030.

## Saturday, December 5

*Latin American Music Series*, 7 P.M., Arte Americas. Alfredo Rolando Ortiz, Latin American Harp. Tickets: \$10 in advance/\$12 at the door. Call 266-2623 for more information.

## Tuesday, December 8

*Monthly Potluck & Discussion*, 6:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Meets every second Tuesday to discuss what it means to have a personal commitment to nonviolence. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:30.

## Thursday, December 10

### *Holiday Season of Conscience Rally*

Noon to 1 P.M.

**Wal-Mart ~ 3680 W. Shaw Avenue**

Call 449-0893

## Saturday, December 12

*Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Holiday Craft Faire*, 10 A.M.-3:30 P.M., First Congregational Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Avenue. Admission is free. For further information or if you're interested in having a booth or table at the event, please call 266-4979.

## Tuesday, December 15

*Health Care for All*, 7 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 855-2438 for more information.

Deadline for submission of information for the January issue of *Labor/Community Alliance*. Call 226-0477.

## Monday, December 28

*Labor/Community Alliance/Jobs with Justice*, 5:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 226-2078.

## This Month in History

**Dec. 1, 1955:** Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery, AL, for refusing to give her seat to a white man.

**Dec. 2, 1979:** War Tax Resistance nationally organized.

**Dec. 4, 1970:** Cesar Chavez jailed for 20 days for refusing to end the California grape boycott.

**Dec. 15, 1791:** U.S. Bill of Rights ratified.

**Dec. 20, 1990:** Army reservist Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn refuses orders to Gulf War. She is later sentenced to prison in Kansas City, KS.

**Dec. 24, 1924:** Costa Rica withdraws from League of Nations to protest Monroe Doctrine, which states U.S. is "big daddy" of North and South America.

**Dec. 25, 1978:** Four "Santa Clauses" arrested for climbing a fence at Pilgrim Nuclear Plant in Plymouth, MA.

**Dec. 26, 1971:** Viet Nam vets begin occupation of the Statue of Liberty.

**Dec. 29, 1970:** Congress passes Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).



## Mergers of the Future?

Somehow it seems inevitable that these bizarre mergers will someday take place:

Fairchild Electronics + Honeywell Computer =  
Fairwell Honeychild

Polygraph Records + Warner Brothers + Keebler =  
Poly-Warner-Cracker

W.R. Grace + Fuller Brush + Mary Kay + Hale Business  
Systems = Hale Mary Fuller Grace

Yahoo + Netscape =  
Net'n'Yahoo (but they'd have to relocate to Tel Aviv)

3M + Goodyear = MMMGood

John Deere + Abitibi-Price = Deere Abi

Honeywell + Imasco + Home Oil + = Honey Im Home

Denison Mines + Alliance + Metal Mining =  
Mine All Mine

3M + JC Penney + Metropolitan Opera = 3 Penney Opera  
Crabtree and Evelyn + Apple Computer = Crab Apple

Zippo Manufacturing + Audi + Dofasco  
+ Dakota Mining = Zip Audi Do Da



## Late-breaking news from *The Bee*

### Teamsters get new election at Bee

The National Labor Relations Board has informed the Teamsters that a new election will be held in the packaging and distribution department of *The Fresno Bee*. New elections are authorized when a company has violated the National Labor Relations Act during a previous election. In the election held last summer, *The Bee* hired goons to threaten employees and violated workers' rights to freedom of assembly.

### Bee censors Labor/Community Alliance

*The Fresno Bee* has blocked all e-mail messages from being sent to its employees by the Labor/Community Alliance. In an example of their non-commitment to free speech and the First Amendment, *The Bee* has electronically blocked this newsletter from communicating with reporters and other employees. When a press release and other information was sent recently, making a statement about workers' rights at *The Bee*, the messages were returned as undeliverable. This is not a case of a temporary delivery problem. It is the systematic interruption of information to workers at *The Bee* because management believes the news this newsletter sends is too dangerous for their employees to know about. They have put a filter on their e-mail system that blocks out all messages from our e-mail address. How is that for *The Bee's* commitment to First Amendment rights?

### Compare the news coverage

When the California Faculty Association at CSUF rallied for a better contract, it was front-page news (with photo) in the Metro section of *The Fresno Bee*. When twice as many people rallied for workers' rights at *The Fresno Bee*, our local paper didn't write a word about it. Another case of censorship?

## Let's get organized

Are you tired of lousy wages, no benefits and no respect on the job? Call one of the following local union organizers to help you make the world a better place to work!

*Pam Whalen, Yolanda Guerra, Gerry Villero*

**SEIU Local 535:** (559) 261-9312

Public Employees, Health Care, Social Services

*Marc Scalzo*

**International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 653:** (559) 264-2817

Auto Repair, Industrial, Retail, Consumer Electronics

*Doug Whipple*

**Carpenters Local 701:** (559) 268-3895 (Carpenters)

*Angel Esquivel*

**Teamster organizer at The Fresno Bee**

(559) 638-2577 (Packaging and distribution department)

*Kenneth McCormack*

**International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 100:** (559) 251-8241 (Electricians)

*Jimmy Hammack*

**Teamster Local 431:** (559) 486-5410

*Dave Otero*

**Graphic Communications International Union Local 404:** (559) 237-4405 (Printers)

**Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees Union**

**Local 19** (Restaurant Workers) (209) 485-0601

**United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1288**

(209) 442-1288 (Retail Clerks)

# Labor News



**Strengthening Social Security.** Energized by Labor '98's resounding victories, more than 300 union activists from around the country spent two days exploring strategy and learning how to deliver an effective message about strengthening Social Security at the AFL-CIO's National Social Security Strategy Session on Nov. 13 and 14 in Washington, D.C. They examined the AFL-CIO's principles for responsible Social Security reform, uncovered the corporate forces behind privatizing the nation's foundation of retirement security and galvanized for mobilizing members and allies in the face of legislative action that could come as early as January.

Cindy Tuttle, business secretary of the Sacramento Central Labor Council, urged unionists to use existing membership mobilization strategies, such as Street Heat, in the fight to strengthen Social Security. "Proposition 226 gave us the

opportunity to build a permanent structure," Tuttle said. "Fighting for Social Security is the same kind of opportunity." The AFL-CIO also unveiled a new section on its website, [www.aflcio.org/socialsecurity](http://www.aflcio.org/socialsecurity), where web-surfers can get information, send e-mails to their representatives and submit testimonials about how Social Security has affected their lives.

Truckers Exam Ad



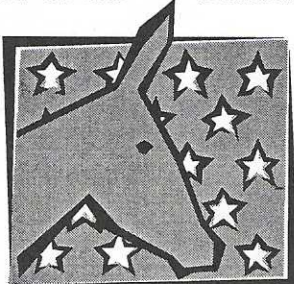
# Hispanic candidates and the electorate

## Good news, bad news

by Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance

First the good news. Hispanic candidates won historic victories in last month's election and played a major role in strengthening the hand of the Democratic Party in California.

Cruz came the first to a statewide win, and Sarah H i s p a n i c the state as-San Joaquin



Bustamante became the first Hispanic elected office in California. Reyes the first woman elected to assembly from the Valley.

The next Legislature will include 24 Hispanic members, six of them newly elected, which means that with the help of a Democratic governor, we should see a major shift in state politics away from the policies of racial division so effectively pursued by the Wilson administration.

So, who elected these candidates? That brings us to the bad news, for even though the American population as a whole is racially and culturally diverse, the voting population is not. The fact remains that the increased presence of Hispanic and other minorities in state and local government is largely the result of their acceptance by white voters. That whites will vote for minority candidates is, of course, a positive development, but whatever benefits it brings to minority communities in this state could well be short-lived if voter demographics in this country do not change.

Voter participation by minorities was sharply up in this last election, especially among African-Americans, but one electoral cycle does not a trend make. In modern elections, the demographic profile of those who actually vote has become increasingly affluent, well-educated, and white, which means that with increased voter apathy, a smaller and smaller percentage of the American population is choosing our leaders, and that percentage includes progressively fewer minorities.

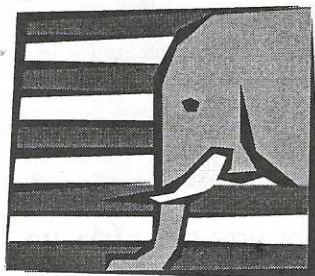
Only about 23 percent of eligible voters cast their ballot for President Clinton in the last election, and only about 20 percent voted for the Republican Congress and their Contract with America. Economic realities being what they are in this country, with the poor and the under-educated being less likely to vote, and with minority communities suffering from low rates of income and educational achievement, affluent white communities are still exerting a disproportionate influence on the outcome of elections, including the election of minority candidates.

The issue, therefore, is not really one of race but of economic class. If the white middle and upper classes feel comfortable today in voting for minority candidates, they might not tomorrow, especially if they perceive a threat to their economic well-being. They might perceive as bad for them-

selves what would be good for poorer minority communities, and if the poor are still not voting, there could be a sharp drop in the number of Hispanic and African-American elected officials.

There are trends working against this possibility, however, especially regarding Hispanics. Both major political parties are acutely aware that Hispanics will soon become the largest minority in the country and are doing what they can to court their votes. The party that can mobilize that segment of the population will be the party that will wield power in the next century.

Democrats have traditionally been able to count on strong minority support, but that could change with successful Republican appeals to Hispanics, and we have already seen evidence of this. Republican candidates George Bush, Jr., and Jeb Bush, both speak Spanish, to the governor of Texas and respectively, with panic support. California, the education initiative 227 won



of whom won election norships of Florida, re-strong His-Earlier in anti-bilingual tiative Propo-in part be-

cause it also had strong backing in the Hispanic community.

Ralph Reed, former head of the Christian Coalition, has warned Republicans that they could be permanently out of power if they don't make a more concerted effort to reach out to minorities. In other words, Republicans are thinking hard about this issue, so Democrats and Progressives should continue to do the same.

It took the states of the old Confederacy more than a hundred years to forgive the Republicans for Reconstruction, but forgive them they did, to the sorrow of Democrats. It will take a lot less time than that for Hispanics to display the same forgiveness for such things as Republican anti-immigrant efforts, if they believe it to be in their best interest. But that will only happen if they get to the polls in greater numbers than they currently do.



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## Labor plays key role in Democratic sweep

### Union households deliver the vote

Labor '98 was the key to victory for Democratic candidates across California. On Election Day, union members and their families were 29 percent of all voters, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

But turnout was just the beginning of the story. Union households delivered the big margins for Gray Davis and Barbara Boxer, voting 70 percent yes for Davis and 64 percent yes for Boxer, the *Times* reported. Non-union voters were less supportive, voting only 54 percent yes for Davis and 50 percent yes for Boxer.

The combination of strong turnout and high loyalty made labor the most powerful force on November 3.

Early in September, Labor '98 set ambitious goals for turnout and performance among union household voters. By remaining focused on pocketbook issues that matter most to working families, unions delivered the vote.

Organized labor in California completes the 1998 election cycle with two major victories. In the primary, we beat Prop. 226. In the general election, we built on that momentum with a strong and successful program.

Congratulations to volunteers, union leaders and working families across California.

### Strength of labor program picks up five seats in Assembly, two in Senate

When the legislature reconvenes in January, pro-labor majorities in the California Legislature will be stronger thanks to our success in key targeted races. While we did not win every targeted race, we ran intensive programs that made a difference and contributed to an important net gain.

Targeted Races	Margin	Dem%	Union HH
<b>SENATE</b>			
2 Wes Chesbro	23,650	51%	23,703
6 Deborah Ortiz	31,176	55%	21,071
12 Sal Cannella	-16,927	44%	24,779
32 Joe Baca	25,128	59%	19,743
34 Joe Dunn	2,666	51%	9,168
<b>Average</b>	<b>13,139</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19,693</b>

### ASSEMBLY

1 Virginia Strom-Martin	36,310	62%	8,194
10 Debra Gravert	-221	49%	12,973
30 Dean Florez	5,624	55%	6,415
31 Sarah Reyes	9,046	59%	5,899
35 Hanna-Beth Jackson	7,852	53%	9,252
37 Rosalina McGrath	-526	48%	9,450
43 Scott Wildman	25,596	65%	9,631
44 Jack Scott	16,993	57%	10,001
53 George Nakano	24,447	61%	9,867
54 Alan Lowenthal	3,044	50%	9,196
56 Sally Havice	7,581	53%	13,640
60 Ben Wong	-5,664	52%	12,634
61 Nell Soto	7,734	56%	9,619
68 Mike Matsuda	-4,856	54%	9,504
69 Lou Correa	3,990	54%	4,790
78 Howard Wayne	17,297	56%	5,825
<b>Average</b>	<b>9,640</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>9,181</b>

### CONGRESS

1 Mike Thompson	51,995	62%	10,884
3 Sandi Dunn	-14,340	53%	15,821
22 Lois Capps	17,474	55%	13,222
24 Brad Sherman	31,083	58%	15,161
27 Barry Gordon	-4,797	47%	14,986
36 Janice Hahn	-3,252	49%	14,852
42 George Brown	16,206	55%	16,819
49 Christine Kehoe	-4,056	46%	9,732
<b>Average</b>	<b>11,290</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>13,935</b>

In our top five State Senate races, the average margin of victory was 13,139 votes, and union households represented nearly 20,000 voters. We contacted them by mail, phone, and in the field a minimum of 125,000 times.

In the Assembly, 17 races were decided by 9,640 votes, and our working families campaign made more than 60,000 contacts. In Congress, eight races swung on 11,290 votes, and union households represented 14,000 voters receiving a minimum of 90,000 contacts.

(from California Labor Federation website: [www.calaborfed.org](http://www.calaborfed.org))

### MAI, cont. from page 4

➤ **Expropriation and Compensation**—The MAI grants extraordinary rights to corporations, protecting them from government action that might reduce the value of their investments. Using broad definitions of investor rights, these rules would empower corporations and investors to demand cash damages for any government action that has the "equivalent effect" of an "indirect expropriation."

➤ **Investor-to-State Dispute Resolution**—The MAI grants individual corporations the right to sue governments when they believe their rights under the agreement have been violated. This opens the possibility of exposing governments to potentially large liabilities, forcing governments to defend public health or environmental regulations against charges that they unfairly discriminate against foreign investors or constitute "indirect" expropriation.

➤ **Immigration**—The MAI allows unrestricted "temporary entry" for employees of multinational corporations. This particular type of immigration allowance has been subject to misuse in the past.

➤ **Long-Lasting Impact**—The MAI locks in most of its provisions for twenty years. Countries may not exit for five years after ratifying the agreement, and the investment provisions will continue to apply to existing investments for an additional fifteen years. For all of these reasons, the MAI is irredeemably flawed, and the US government should reject any attempt to lock in these rules. The AFL-CIO calls instead for a restructuring of the world's international financial institutions to promote sustainable, egalitarian economic development around the globe. We support global rules that create strong enforceable rights for labor, communities, and the environment; that enunciate clear responsibilities for investors; and that create democratic accountability over capital.



## Report from the war zone

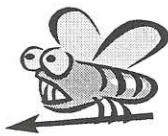
### Organizing at The Fresno Bee

by Mike Rhodes, Labor/Community Alliance

If you have been reading this newsletter for the last couple of months, you know that there has been an intense union organizing drive at *The Fresno Bee*. You also know that *The Bee* has used every tactic (legal and illegal) at its disposal and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to defeat this organizing campaign. Our daily paper, the same one that so many readers complain about as being too "liberal," has turned out to be one of the most vicious anti-union corporations around. The Labor/Community Alliance would like to update you on some of the incidents we have reported on in earlier issues.

Jerry Haydostian, the transportation department employee *The Bee* fired for union organizing, was initially denied unemployment benefits because the employer challenged his claim and said he was terminated "for cause." You will be glad to know that Jerry won his unemployment case and will receive back benefits. Now it is on to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearing where it is anticipated that *The Bee* will be ordered to reinstate Jerry with full back pay.

Another tactic *The Bee* used to defeat the union in the transportation department election was to offer health and time employees if they voted against the union. Illegal? Of course! Bribery is illegal in any election, but that was no deterrent to *The Bee*. The union tried to warn employees that without a contract they had no guarantee they would receive the promised benefits.



Sure enough, two weeks after the election the company sent employees a letter saying that the promised benefits were being postponed, and that "the company is in the same position that it was during the election period: It is prohibited from making unilateral changes in wages, benefits, hours, and other conditions of employment." *The Bee* is trying to blame the union for the delay in implementing the benefits, but the employees know management is talking out of both sides of its mouth. If *The Bee* is "prohibited" from offering the benefits now, why wasn't it "prohibited" during the election?

On the negotiating front, the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) is fighting for a decent first contract for pressroom employees. In the first negotiating session *The Bee* proposed to take away their 401(k) retirement plan, increase hours, and force other cutbacks on the department. This is an obvious attempt to punish the pressroom for voting union. GCIU will need community support to win a fair contract with the union busters at *The Bee*. This newsletter will keep you informed about what you can do to help.

The Newspaper Guild (editorial department) is also negotiating a contract right now. Workers there were forced to work under posted conditions until they signed a contract two years ago. We plan to bring you a report on the status of their negotiations next month.

The Teamsters are expecting a new election in the packaging and distribution department. Hearings were held in Fresno and the NLRB took particular interest in the

surveillance issue. Apparently *The Bee* trained security cameras on union supporters in the parking lot and then sent guards out to break up any meetings. This is, of course, against the law, and could lead to another election.

In spite of the hardships, workers need to continue organizing inside "the hive." Those of us on the outside have a role to play as well. Organized labor needs to continue providing resources to help organize and support the workers at *The Bee*. This effort also requires the support of the community. People who care about issues of social justice need to come to rallies in support of workers rights. Maybe, as many have suggested, a boycott will force *The Bee* to respect the rights of workers. Whatever the tactic, for us to succeed, we will have to pull together the forces of organized labor, the religious community, and community groups.

## Sample Letter to Congress

### MAI Campaign of Inquiry

**Address this to your U.S. Senators and Representative:**

I am writing to inquire about the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), a treaty currently being negotiated at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The MAI seems designed to accelerate economic globalization by bolstering the rights of corporations and investors and limiting Congress' ability to set rules about investment in the United States. From what I've read about it, the MAI seems like a global NAFTA or a World Trade Organization for investment rules.

The most alarming aspect, from my perspective, is a proposal to give corporations and investors the legal tools, or "standing," to directly sue governments if the companies believe they haven't been given everything a country owes them under the treaty. I have never heard of any other treaty that gives private corporations or investors this kind of power. Do you know of anything like this? Also, who would pay the fines if a private corporation wins against our government? Could our tax dollars go to paying these fines?

I'm also concerned that some of the existing laws that we now use to regulate investments—like environmental standards, community reinvestment programs, living wage laws and performance requirements—could be hurt by the MAI. It seems that the fundamental powers of our state and local governments to shape our own economic futures could be threatened if that were the case. Do we want to make it even easier for locally owned or managed businesses to be replaced by foreign companies who don't have any stake in creating jobs here, funding our schools, developing our communities or keeping our drinking water clean?

Apparently the MAI has been under negotiation at the OECD since May 1995. The treaty was supposed to be completed this May, but has now been delayed a few months. It is disturbing if negotiations of such a powerful international economic treaty could have reached an advanced stage without the scrutiny and cooperation of citizens, elected officials, and non-governmental organizations.

Have you had any input in the MAI negotiations? Is Congress being consulted? If not, why not? No one I've called seems to know anything about this but it sounds as if a significant amount of U.S. laws could be affected. Who supports the MAI? Is the MAI another element of these foreign money campaign scandals?

Both the secretive process of negotiations and what sounds like a really unbalanced result worry me. Please write back quickly with answers to these questions and any additional information on the MAI, including your personal positions.

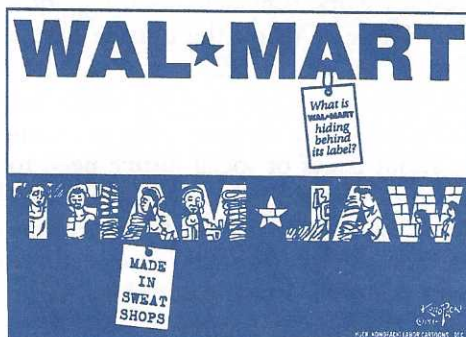


## Labor/Community Alliance

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## More Labor News



**Sham election slammed.** California's farm-labor board has thrown out the results of a sham union election at Coastal Berry, finding that workers who should have been notified about the balloting were not, potentially skewing the outcome. The Nov. 5 decision by an investigative hearing examiner at the Agricultural Labor Relations Board said the results of a July vote installing a sham union should be dismissed because 162 workers weren't informed that there was an election. The margin of victory was 113 votes. The anti-union "union" filed a protest, but officials at the United Farm Workers are confident the ALRB will affirm the hearing examiner's decision.

**The more things change.** The latest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Occupational Health and Safety* shows that today's workers face many of the same dangers as did those in 1930 when the first edition was published. "Despite all of the advances in knowledge and workplace protection of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, tens of millions of workers around the world are continually exposed to chemical, physical and social hazards that drain their health and their spirits," said Michel Hansenne, director-general of the International Labor Organization, which produced the book.

**Maquilas keep growing.** Employment in the nearly 4,000 maquiladoras along the U.S.-Mexico border grew 13 percent in the first eight months of 1998 to 1.022 million, according to

Mexico's National Statistics Institute. Maquiladoras are low-paying manufacturing and assembly plants, many owned by U.S. companies, that import parts duty-free and reexport them, taking away good U.S. jobs. Some companies take advantage of lax environmental laws to pollute streams and the air, leading to serious health problems among workers and families on both sides of the border.

**Security clauses upheld.** The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a blow to anti-union forces Nov. 3 by unanimously upholding the language used in most union security clauses. The case, *Marquez vs. Screen Actors Guild*, began when Naomi Marquez, an actress in Washington State, was denied a role because she had not paid required dues, as specified under the contract with Lakeside Productions. The language in the contract mirrored a section of the National Labor Relations Act and is used in 80 percent of all union contracts. The virulently anti-union National Right to Work organization represented Marquez.

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