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October 18, 2004

LABOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY

SPECIAL REPORT:

Union Plagued by Accusations of Violence Against Bush Campaign

The AFL-CIO's image has been battered during the last several weeks by a string of violent acts committed against headquarters, volunteers and personnel of the Bush campaign. Some of the violent acts have been directly linked to people and protests coordinated by the AFL-CIO.

In an October 11th letter to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, Bush-Cheney campaign Chairman Marc Racicot took the union official to task for failing to put a stop to the protests that have ended in physical injuries and property damage.

"I hope you will put an end to protest activities that have led to injuries, property damage, vandalism and voter intimidation. We will hold you and your organization accountable for the actions of your members and urge you to immediately discontinue any coordinated protest efforts that result in damage to our facilities, or injury to people who may hold different political views than your members, but who share an equal right to be involved in the political process without suffering violence, intimidation and threats," wrote Racicot.

Among the injuries and property damage that has been reported against the Bush campaign:

- Break-in, property damage and theft from the Seattle and Canton, OH offices.
- Gunshots fired into headquarters in West Virginia, Florida and Tennessee.
- Windows broken in in West Virginia.
- Swastika burned into the lawn of a Bush supporter showing a yard sign in Wisconsin.

The violence against the campaign reached a crescendo on October 5th, when according to published reports the AFL-CIO coordinated a series of protests at Bush headquarters around the country. In many locations the AFL-CIO protestors attempted to, and in some cases succeeded in forcing their way into the Bush offices, resulting in property damage, personal injury, and volunteer intimidation.

The most widely publicized episode occurred at the **Orlando**, Florida Bush headquarters where approximately 60 AFL-CIO protestors stormed the office, fractured the arm of a campaign staffer, and vandalized the office. A 53 year old protestor was to be charged with two counts of battery. Interestingly, the unrepentant protestor blamed the staffer for inflicting the injury on himself.

In **Miami**, roughly 100 protestors stormed the office but left before police arrived. In **Tampa**, 35 protestors entered the Republican office there to intimidate elderly volunteers making telephone calls, according to John Fund of the Wall Street Journal.

On its website, the AFL-CIO took credit for coordinating the protests in Independence and Kansas City, Missouri; Dearborn, Michigan; St. Paul, Minnesota; and West Allis, Wisconsin: all battleground states in the Presidential campaign.

While some violent acts have stemmed from protests organized by the union, other acts have not been connected. Yet, little action has been seen from the leadership of unions supporting the President's opponent to make clear that violence on the campaign trail is unacceptable and undermines the democratic process.

It appears Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai has seen fewer acts of violence directed at his campaign than President Bush.

From the United States Code (USC)

Title 18, USC, Section 241: Conspiracy against rights

It is a crime "[I]f two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person in any State, Territory, Commonwealth, Possession, or District in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States...."

Title 42, USC, Section 1971: Voting rights

"Intimidation, threats, or coercion." "No person...shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or attempt to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of such other person to vote or to vote as he may choose, or of causing such other person to vote for, or not to vote for, any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, presidential elector...."

NEA's "Victory '04 Alert" Political? Judge for Yourself

Is the National Education Association's "**Victory '04 Alert**" weekly e-mail non-partisan and informational, or political?

A few questions.

First, it's called **Victory '04** and it's delivered "Every Friday from now to election week." Victory in what? If it's not referring to "victory" in the election, then just what is it they're referring to?

Second, victory for whom? Well, according to the e-mail "*The National Education Association wants a President who agrees with us that every child deserves a great public school, who believes a stronger America begins in our nation's classrooms.*"

It then goes on to say this about John Kerry:

As President, John Kerry will fix and fund the No Child Left Behind law and bring about changes that give teachers the freedom to teach, not just administer tests.

And this about President Bush:

George Bush fought for No Child Left Behind and then refused to provide the promised funding.

For more information, go to www.nea.org/vote and log on with user name: NEA and password: vote4kids.

Since the e-mail encouraged the recipient to forward the e-mail on to colleagues and family members, it's ok for us to pass the information on to you to see for yourself just what the union is saying about the President and John Kerry on its website.

"Million Worker March" Falls Short By...Almost a Million

In Washington, DC they called it "smaller-than-expected." In the heartland, they have a simpler word for it: a flop.

Intended to resemble the "Million Man March" organized by Louis Farrakhan in 1995, organizers already knew their event was going to fall short of expectations. On their permit application with the National Park Service, they estimated attendance of 100,000 – 10% of the original plan.

In reality, about 10% of the 10% of the original plan showed up for the event, which was held to "highlight the social, economic and political hardships facing working Americans at home and on the job," according to the Washington Post.

Socialist and anti-war sentiment was plainly visible at the event. The Post reported on Steve Burns, a Wisconsin teacher, who endured 14 hours in a van to let the world see his handmade sign: "End For-Profit Healthcare." *For information on how this concept works in practice, see: North Korea, Cuba and other such paradises where healthcare is "free."*

Other protestors called for: a repeal of the Patriot Act, a national "living wage," socialized health care coverage from "cradle to grave," an end to US troops in Iraq, and free mass transit. The "non-partisan" event featured frequent bashing of President Bush.

REFORMING LABOR

Teachers Union in Utah Subject of Campaign Finance Complaint

The Salt Lake Tribune reported on the complaint filed by Parents for Choice in Education against the Utah Education Association for illegally diverting dues paid by its members to political activity. The school choice group pointed to inadequacies in the UEA's campaign finance reports filed with the state Elections Office. [Story](#)

A 2001 law, the Voluntary Contributions Act, specifically prohibits public employee unions in the state from diverting member dues to political activity. Such groups must establish a separate, segregated account funded purely by voluntary contributions and without transfers from the union's general fund.

LABOR'S POLICY AGENDA

"Employee Free Choice Act" is Kerry's Plan to...Eliminate Employee Choice

With union membership down to about 8% of the private sector workforce, union officials continue to press government to make it more difficult for workers to choose to not belong to a labor union.

The "Employee Free Choice Act," supported by many Democrats in Congress, would make it easier for unions to bypass democratic practices in unionizing workplaces while channeling more employer-employee decisions into forced arbitration.

Secret ballot elections are the first target of the act. Instead of having a free and competitive election where a workforce can unionize if a majority votes for union representation, a new process called "card check" would be used.

"Card check" is an open door to employee intimidation. Fair elections where one's vote is kept private minimizes the opportunity to intimidate the worker. By contrast, union organizers can produce a "majority" for union representation by taking one worker after another into a room and applying whatever pressure is needed to produce the desired result.

In short, voting is traded for signing a card, and voter privacy is completely eliminated. Supporters of the EFCA call this "choice."

The second tool for forcing more workers into union contracts is EFCA's requirement forcing employers into binding arbitration if no contract agreement is reached with the newly recognized labor union after 120 days. This is designed to reverse Labor's success rate in securing contracts on behalf of workforces that choose to be represented by the union of only about 50%.

Binding arbitration puts decisions about compensation packages and working conditions into the hands of outside arbitrators with limited knowledge of how a business operates. [Summary of the proposal](#)

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