



From left: Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, Alan Curtis, and Jeff Faux

Student-Faculty Forum

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OPENING STATEMENT OF DR. SUE SCHURMAN
PRESIDENT
NATIONAL LABOR COLLEGE

DR. SCHURMAN: For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sue Schurman. I'm the president of your college, and proud of it.

I am extremely pleased and honored to be introducing our guests this evening, and after they've spoken, I'll be making a



gentle attempt to moderate our discussion, which I know will be very lively.

We are extremely fortunate to have with us this evening three people who represent a large group of people, who together have written this absolutely marvelous book that will be available, and I hope you all pick one up and I hope you read it.

You will find within the contents of this volume, called *Patriotism, Democracy, and Common Sense: Restoring America's Promise at Home and Abroad*, some of the leading thinkers and writers from the progressive movement in the United States, and they put this volume together, but they didn't just write a book. This is part of a campaign for us to take our country

back, and make it what it ought to be. And so they've been taking the book around the country and holding forums like this, to meet with folks like yourselves so that we can have a dialogue about what's our responsibility to change the policies that are governing our country today.

I'm proud to say that one of our own faculty members, Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, is a member of the, in the book. I'm proud to welcome back Mr. Jeff Faux from the Economic Policy Institute, and a great friend of ours, as he's been here many times.

And I'm very proud to invite, for the first time, to welcome to our campus, Dr. Alan Curtis. Alan is the President and CEO of the Eisenhower Foundation, which is based here in Washington, D.C., which is a private foundation that's dedicated to the causes of reducing inequality, justice for all Americans, all workers, and all citizens around the world.

Eisenhower is a private-sector foundation, a continuation of the urban-violence commissions that many of you may remember from the 60s. Some of you are as old as I am, or getting there, and like me, you got your start in the civil-rights movement in the 60s. That was your call to the social-justice movement, and you found the labor movement as a natural extension of that movement. I don't have to tell you that our movement has not always stood for those ideals, but it must if we're going to grow. If we're going to take back the country, take back our movement, then we must make common cause with people, like these folks that are up here with us with the Eisenhower Foundation. I'm just delighted, Alan, to have you join us, I'm going to turn it over to you to speak first, and introduce the rest of the panel members, and when they're done, we'll have some time for you to tell them what you think, or ask them whatever questions you want to ask them.

Welcome to the National Labor College, Dr. Curtis.

PRESENTATION OF DR. ALAN CURTIS

PRESIDENT

MILTON S. EISENHOWER FOUNDATION

DR. CURTIS: Thank you. I want to thank Sue and Yvonne and Jeff and the Labor College for having us, and especially you. I know you have a really hectic week and it's a crazy time, I'm sure you'll all do brilliantly on your theses.

We wanted to cover some important issues, but I hope it doesn't take too much of your time today, and tonight. The foundation, as Sue said, is a continuation of two presidential commissions: the Riot Commission, after the big city riots in the 60s,

and the National Violence Commission, after the assassinations of Rev. King and Sen. Kennedy.

One of the members of the National Violence Commission was Eric Hoffer, longshoreman and migratory worker and philosopher. Eric agreed with one of the main conclusions of the Violence Commission, which was that most civilizations have declined less from external threat than from internal decay. *Patriotism, Democracy, and Common Sense* is about how to reverse the internal decay that has been created by America's ruling elite, and Yvonne and Jeff and I are just three of the contributors of the book, as Sue said. My role tonight is an overview of the book. Yvonne and Jeff will, among other things, talk about what's wrong with Kansas, about how we can strengthen the progressive infrastructure in America, and about what the role of organized labor might be in that process. We also want to keep plenty of time for you for give and take.

Let me try to tell you something about the conclusions in this book. Winston Churchill began one of his volumes after the second World War, his memoirs, with this subtitle: *How the Great Democracies Triumphed, and So Were Able to Resume the Follies Which Had So Nearly Cost Them Their Lives*.

The 2004 election is well past us, baseball has returned to Washington, much to the delight of my 8 year-old daughter, Miranda, and America -- I would suggest to you -- has resumed its own follies. For America, the fundamental realities remain unchanged.

September 11th could have been prevented, and Osama bin Laden has not been captured. From 2003 to 2004 the number of U.S. government-defined terrorist incidents has tripled around the world. From 2003 to 2004, the number of U.S. government-defined terrorist incidents in Iraq has increased ninefold. Currently, violence is escalating again in Iraq. Without weapons of mass destruction, nor a link to September 11th, Iraq remains a killing field that has misdirected vast American resources. The alleged plan for American economic reconstruction in Iraq is in shambles. Without a sense of history, American is repeating the mistakes of Britain and France in the Mideast. America remains dangerously vulnerable to nuclear, biological and chemical attack back home. A huge American budget surplus has been squandered into a huge budget deficit. The budget that has been proposed by the White House this year is the latest installment of the stealth strategy to radically reduce human capital investments of the middle

class, the working class and the poor.

In terms of wealth and income, America is the most unequal of the industrialized nations. Compared to four years ago, the number of unemployed, and health uninsured has increased. Poverty in America has increased over the last three years. The American government has neglected civil rights, and school segregation has continued to increase over the last four years.

In spite of the high incarceration in the world, America still has homicide rates about as high as in the late 1960s. The American criminal justice system remains racially biased, has a 70 percent recidivism rate, and ensures that millions of ex-offenders are unable to vote against the ruling elite. America media continue to be in fewer and fewer corporate hands. Mainstream media now finally admit to biased coverage in Iraq.

Finally, the American voting abuses of 2000 have not been corrected, and the result is further loss of American soft power abroad. These realities reflect current policy, which is based on domination and misinformation by the ruling elite, and we won't return to those current policies, but instead of focusing on them and the current folly of American policy, we need -- I suggest -- a new policy that creates a stronger and safer America, with a more secure economic and educational future. We need what Jeff Faux has called a "fair economic deal," more equitable prosperity and more honest communication between leaders and the people. We need a new climate of public morality, and a more genuine grassroots democracy. We need a new policy based on the lessons of history, the evidence of science, and the common sense of David Letterman's mom.

So, here is an illustrative Top Ten list of new policy principles, and of the ways and means to get them accepted by the American people.

One. American needs a strong 21st century military that balances cutting edge technology with human ingenuity. No comprehensive alternative foreign and domestic policy is likely unless we can convince the American people that our military can effectively defend us. At the same time, the leadership of our intelligence gathering and analyzing agencies should be modeled on the independence of former CIA director Stansfield Turner. We suffer when political lackeys run our intelligence agencies.

Two. A strong military must legitimize preventive, multi-lateral diplomacy backed by force. We don't need John Wayne.

We do need Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Preventive, multi-lateral diplomacy requires greatly increased and more cost effective foreign aid.

Three. Jimmy Carter's Nobel prize-winning leadership must negotiate a two-state solution in Palestine/Israel that acknowledges this, the heart of Muslim hatred towards America. The U.N. intervention that secured East Timor is a partial roadmap.

Four. A new hands-on, demand-side economic policy must rescind voodoo tax cuts for the conservative elite, carry out a fair economic deal of constituency-building tax cuts for the middle class, the working class and the poor, and dramatically increase long-term, human capital, public-infrastructure investment. Job planning and job creation must be linked to the public infrastructure investment American so desperately needs. We are behind all other industrialized nations in job creating, and public infrastructure investment.

Five. We must use the concept of security to frame and interrelate many of our reforms and strategies. For example, America needs more physical security against biological, chemical and nuclear attack. America needs more job and job training security against the class warfare by the ruling elite. America needs more education security through a Nation Science Education Defense Act. America needs more health security through universal coverage based on a National Medical Defense Act. America needs more social security that acknowledges public opposition to privatization. America needs more voting security to help protect citizens from the hidden agendas of the ruling elite.

Six. America must acknowledge that contrary to what conventional misinformation is thrown out by the ruling elite, we do know what works for the truly disadvantaged. The issue is not lack of knowledge. The issue is lack of political will. The problem is not the boys in the 'hood. The problem is the boys on the Hill.

Based on decades of scientific evaluations, we must replicate what we have already proven to work -- and do it at a scale equal to the dimensions of the problem as the Kerner Commission advocated in the mid-sixties. That means in response to replicable problems in disadvantaged neighborhoods, we need multiple solutions. From Head Start, safe havens with mentors after school, Quantum Opportunities (remedial education using computers), and Full-Service Community Schools, training first rather than work

first, job creation to repair the rotting public infrastructure, community-based banking, community development corporations, and community-based, problem-oriented policing.

Seven. To secure and legislate this agenda, we must -- among other strategies -- strengthen the indigenous, grass roots, non-profit organizations throughout the country that replicate so much of what really does work. For example, we need to strengthen the financial, organizational, fundraising, communications and advocacies capacities of community grassroots non-profits, and to create more collaboration between them and union locals. We must democratize the policy debate, as we are doing tonight, so that rank and file people at the grassroots are better informed, more motivated and more able to act day to day, not just every four years.

In a recent article in the *American Prospect*, Jeff Faux has articulated well how people need to be involved in daily dialogue with their friends and neighbors. As part of such common dialogue, indigenous grassroots organizations need to become neighborhood hubs of training in George Lakoff-style framing of policy issues. They need to become neighborhood hubs of communications and television training in how to be effective in the print and electronic media. People associated with thousands upon thousands of grassroots organizations need to be framing and communicating the same messages day in and day out. The other side is doing that; we are not. This non-profit organization framing and communicating needs to be done, again, in collaboration with union locals.

Leila McDowell is going to be following up with you, because she is heading the Eisenhower effort to expand communications and strategic planning, including a television school which we would like all of you to be part of, if you're interested, and I hope you can follow up with Lela and do that, we began talking with Sue a little in the cafeteria before, and so I think this is one area where we can really work together in communications, television, training, the conservatives have it, we don't have it enough in order to get the message out and be on the same page.

Eight. In support of such grassroots infrastructure development, national organizations, modeled after Move On-dot-org, need to be raising funds on the Internet through thousands of small donors. This funding needs to be leveraged against funding from unions, foundations and individuals.

National non-profit organizations need to help ensure that local folks across the country are on the same page. Local progressive institutions, for example, like the Century Foundation, need to be created by new philanthropist who undertake and disseminate supportive policy analyses that are readable at the grassroots level. Such analyses should be based on fact, and on scientific evaluation, not on the kind of “two plus two equals five” ideological misinformation that issues from conservative think tanks like The Heritage Foundation. Progressive, national non-profits must press systematically for voting rights and campaign finance reform.

Nine. We must follow the lead of national non-profits like Free Press to democratize the media as the founding fathers originally wanted. We need to embrace the strategies on *OhMyNews* in Korea, and strengthen alternatives, like Pacifica Radio. Push for expansion of PBS funding, and publicize the link between media reform and campaign finance reform.

Ten. Finally, we must invoke the spirit and the wisdom of the late Father Geno Baroni. In 1977, Father Baroni was appointed Assistant Secretary at HUD for neighborhoods, non-profit organizations and allowances among the poor, the working class and the middle class. He was brought in by Fritz Mondale and he really persuaded workers and poor folks to unify in common cause, a unity that has since been broken down. Geno Baroni would have successfully lobbied for Jesus to participate in the debate last fall, and to focus on increased poverty, increased inequality, and increased segregation. In spite of attacks by Fox News, by Rush and by O'Reilly, Jesus would have won the debate, and the moral high ground. Would not the gods of the other great religions have done exactly the same? Father Baroni had clout when he fought for money at OMB. He viewed the federal budget as a moral document. Geno told us that every economic and social issue is a moral issue. We must, then, frame future debate in the language of public morality. It is publicly immoral, I suggest, for a fifth of America's youngest children to live in poverty.

It is publicly immoral for America's CEOs to earn over 450 times as much as America's workers, and over 250 times as much as America's teachers.

It is publicly immoral for the states to spend more on prison building than on higher education.

It is public immoral for the white prison industrial complex to profit from the racially biased American criminal justice

system.

It is publicly immoral to torture and sexually humiliate prisoners abroad.

It is publicly immoral for America to pretend it is pursuing democracy building, and faith-based policy while we kowtow before an authoritarian, non-democratic, atheist China.

This is the China that is committing genocide in Tibet. This is the China that has reneged on democracy in Hong Kong, this is the China America has allowed to hold much of our huge international debt. This is the China that is taking away hundreds of thousands of jobs from us. This is the China that does not permit unions.

It is publicly immoral to give undemocratic China such economic advantage when the brave, new and greedy world of corporate globalization will, at the same time, allow us to do little economically to reward Nelson Mandela's democracy in South Africa.

It is publicly immoral, then, to cover up government immorality by pretending our policy is faith-based. With this sense of public morality, the struggling middle and working classes, the increasing poor in America, and the increasing poor around the globe must never forget that the radical American ruling elite is withholding the dream from all of us. The radical elite is deferring our dream.

What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester, and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat, or sugar over like syrupy sweet. Or as that dream just sags like a heavy load, or my friends, explode with passion and strategic action, we must -- I conclude -- diffuse the explosions and fulfill the dream.

I challenge the American Labor Movement to fulfill the dream with us by re-inventing itself and by creating with us a new, long-term, populist and progressive infrastructure in America. Thank you.

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PRESENTATION OF JEFF FAUX
PRESIDENT EMERITUS AND FOUNDER
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Okay, thank you very much, Alan, for that great speech and that generous introduction. I'm not sure I deserve it. But on the other hand, as you can see, I've lost most of my hair, and I don't think I deserve that either, but maybe these things sort of even out.

As Alan said, I don't usually walk around with a cane, but I've got a little disc problem that set up me about two weeks ago, and for the most of the last two weeks I've been sitting flat on my back and going to the doctor, and this is one issue that you tend to think about a lot when you're in that situation -- and that is health care. Well, not exactly health care, that's number two, number one is, as the doctor says, "Oh no, you've got to go to the orthopedist," and then he says, "No, you've got to go to the neurosurgeon, and you've got to get the x-ray, you've got to get the MRI," you're sitting there worrying about your doctor, what you're really worried about is, "Who's going to pay for all this stuff?" And, in a way, my own issue with my back is a little bit of a symbol of health care in this country.

Forty years ago, I fell off a fence and and hurt my back. I had no money. I had a part-time job, a union bartender's job, but I had no health insurance and to make a long story short, I got my back operated on in a city hospital on a program that just for poor people. Those were the good old days. If you couldn't afford it, they'd operate on it.

Well, these two guys operated on it, they were kind of young, I thought they were teenagers, but it turned out that they knew how to get into my back, and things worked okay for about three or four years, and it happened again, and it turned out they were quite

inexperienced surgeon. Now, that was forty years ago. Now there's two difference between now and forty years ago. One is, I have health insurance now, and I didn't have it before, second is that there is still no health care, actual health care in this country.

Forty million people without insurance, another 20 million that numbers say are covered, but they have like a \$5,000 deductible, so go ahead and have a baby, go ahead and have two babies, you're still not covered.

Another thing that's changing a little bit is now they're closing public hospitals, because there's no money for people who can't pay.

Now, you've heard Alan talk about *Patriotism, Democracy, and Common Sense* -- the middle word is democracy. This is, I'm told, a democracy. Since 1949 when Harry Truman first suggested that we have national health care, every year the polls have showed that the majority of the American people believe that the U.S. government ought to be responsible for making sure that every American has access to affordable health care. Since 1949. Fifty six years ago. We're the only advanced country, and practically we're the only country in the world without national health insurance. Now, if you ask why, people say, "Well, you know, we can't afford that."

Now, this is obviously a very rich country. The United States spends 50 percent more per capita on health care than any other industrial country. We take 15 percent of our entire economy and spend it on health care, the Canadians spend about 9 percent.

The next objection is, "Well, people don't like big government, big government's inefficient." When Bill Clinton tried to promote his health care program back in 1993, many of us were involved with that, we were making the case for public health care, and the conservatives would say, "Oh, you're talking about having the government manage the health care system." And from Clinton on down, we were told, "No, no, no, say no, no we're not talking about that," which was bullshit. Of course we were talking about the government managing the health care system, how else would you do it? How else would you do it, and yet the Clinton Administration refused to deal with that question, when that question came up, talk about something else, they'd say, "Oh no, we're not talking about a government program, we're talking about -- ," lose the audience.

Last November in the last campaign when John Kerry debated the jerk who's in the White House now, George Bush turned to the audience and said, "Oh, Kerry thinks that the government should manage the health care system," and Kerry says, "No, no, no, I'm not talking about that," that was bullshit, and I'm a democrat.

But I didn't come here to lie to you. Of course we're talking about that, and one of the reasons we democrats and we in the labor movement who are associated with them, is that we often don't tell the truth to the American people, because we're afraid they're going to think we're for big government, or we're for something they're going to attack us with. The right wing didn't get to win seven out of the last ten elections by being afraid to say what they were for, and often we're afraid to say what we're for.

Big government inefficient? Medicare takes 4 percent of its revenues for administrative expenses. That's the cost of that program -- 4 percent. The average administrative cost in a private insurance company in this country is fifteen percent. The Post Office would do a better job than most of the health insurance companies in this country.

And, by the way, you're probably looking at the only last surviving promoter of the Post Office. You know how they say it's such an inefficient place? Well, for 37 cents I can send a letter to my aunt in Nome, Alaska, and if it gets there in three days, and if she's moved to San Diego, the letter follows her with no additional cost. The Post Office sends a person, a live person, to every house five days a week. It saves lives. A lot of people who are stuck at home and dying, and nobody's coming for them, but the letter carrier knocks on the door, knocks three of four times. "Hey, there's something wrong there."

Instead of running away from these programs, we ought to be telling the story, because when you tell the truth, people get it, they understand it, when you try to run away from it, you can't sell your program.

People hate big government. You can't sell that in America. They hate big government, they hate the U.S. Marines, they hate Social Security, they hate meat inspection -- how many people do you know want to go to a store and buy meat that hasn't been inspected by the big, old bad U.S. government? How many people want to ride an elevator to the 30th floor that hasn't been inspected?

You get the point.

They say, "Oh, well, you look at a place like Canada, there's big long lines for getting into a hospital." Well, I was in Montreal about six weeks ago, and I was sitting there in a hotel lobby and got into a conversation with this woman who was from Toronto, and we got into a conversation about health care. And she said, "Oh yes, it's true. Unless you have an emergency, unless you have something that has to be taken care of right away, in our health care system there are long waits," she said, "For example, I had to have a hip replaced, it wasn't an emergency, and I had to have a long wait." I said, "Geez, how long was the wait?" "Three weeks."

It took me three weeks to get scheduled for a physical therapist here in Washington. So, a lot of this stuff is just lies, and unless we get aggressive about what we believe, clear about what we believe, and not make it appear to the country that we're trying to hide something, then I think we're going to continue in the situation, what Alan described.

Well, the last thing that people say is that big business doesn't want national health care, and that's true. But let's look at that for a moment, because there's something really interesting here. It costs General Motors about \$1,000 more to produce a car in Michigan than it costs right across the border in Canada, because Canada has a national health system, and the Canadian government, through its taxes, pays for the health care of all of the automobile employees. Here the auto workers have to bargain with General Motors to get health care, and that shows up in the cost of the car.

Now, why is it that General Motors isn't out there beating the drums for national health insurance? I mean, that's the way capitalism is supposed to work. A thousand dollars a car? Some people say \$1,100, some people say \$900, but it costs more to make a care in Detroit than Canada.

Well, Bill Clinton thought that the big manufacturers would be behind him in 1993, and we learned something, we learned a lesson there, and we should not forget things that you learn the hard way in life. He thought they'd be for him just because of this disadvantage that they had. But when the health insurance companies started their campaign against national health care, the steel

companies, the automobile companies switched sides. Suddenly, they were against it.

About a year later, I talked to a guy who was a vice president of a steel company, and I went through this, and I said, "I don't understand it, why weren't you guys in favor of Clinton's health care program, a cockamamie scheme, maybe, but it would do the job for ya." And he leaned back, and he smiled and he said, "Well, Jeff, you've got to understand us. We're a country club crowd, and we stick with each other." Right? That is class solidarity. That is upper-class solidarity. And from these guys, they're not sticking in America.

You know, and I know, that for the last fifteen years, they have been outsourcing production overseas for cheap labor. The Ford Motor company, vice president of Ford Motor company in testimony before the U.S. Congress said, in response to a question, "Now, wait a minute, Senator, you've got it wrong. Ford is not an American company. We're an American company when we're in America. When we're in Brazil, we're a Brazilian company, when we're in China, we're a Chinese company." This is the Ford Motor company.

Now, let me just read you something, a little excerpt from the Chairman of the Dow Chemical Company, one of our leading executives: "I have long dreamed of buying an island owned by no nation, and establishing the world headquarters of the Dow Chemical Company on the truly neutral ground of such an island. If we could build there we could really just operate in the United States as just a U.S. company in Japan, as Japanese citizens, in Brazil as Brazilians. We could even pay some of the natives to get out of the way." This is Dow Chemical Company, 1977. So what they have been doing, for the last couple of decades, is systematically getting out of the country.

You know and I know that NAFTA, the world trade organization, has allowed them to outsource -- first it was apparel, and when we raised that issue people said, "Oh no, those are just those low-paying jobs in apparel," and then it was assembling refrigerators and stuff like that, and then it was auto parts and call centers, and then programmers and design engineers, and accountants and radiologists, and the people that say to you, "Well, you might lose your job, but your kids will get educated, and they're without a job in

America." Who wouldn't want their kid to be a radiologist? Or computer programmer? Or design engineer, not just an engineer, but a design engineer.

Business Week, a couple of weeks ago, said that 80 percent of the content of design engineering in the United States could go to China or India. So, these people have been leaving. And the result of that is to reduce the bargaining power of labor, not just labor unions, but every worker. Let me tell you what I mean, could you put that slide up?

What you're going to see is two lines on a chart, and if I was a little more agile, I would have worked this out myself, but, okay, I couldn't get to the office today so I couldn't put it in color, but the first solid black line is worker productivity in the United States since 1993. That is what the average worker, the change in his and her productivity has been over the last decade, all right? So, it goes from, this is an index number, so it's going up about 63 percent.

The second line at the bottom is the average change in real wages. It's gone up about 6 percent. So what the average worker has been producing has gone up about 10 times what the average worker has been getting from it, and the difference there is in the bargaining power of the average worker.

Now, question. If things are so bad, how come they look so good? How come when you walk down the street there's lots of cars, there's people going into Wendy's and McDonald's, how come people are still buying homes? How come we all look okay, if things are as bad as people like Alan and me and others say? Well, there's an answer for that. Things look so good because our country is the world's biggest debtor. The way it gets to look so good, is we borrow so much money from the rest of the world in order to pay for these imports that are produced with outsourcing. For the last 25 years, the United States economy, us, and all the other 200 million people here, have been buying from the rest of the world more than we've been selling.

Now, you don't have to have a Ph.D. in economics to know that you can't buy more than you sell forever. It helps to have a Ph.D. in economics to believe that. But it turns out, those are the only people who believe it. It turns out that we've been buying more

than we've been selling and we've been making up for the difference by borrowing. It's just like, you know, if you lost your job, you could go around on a credit card for, probably quite a while, maybe a few weeks, maybe a few months, maybe some of you could go on for a year or two. You could still stay in your house, you could still have your car, you could still have fun, grand vacations, you neighbors would think things are great. I mean, look at Charlie and Sally, they're doing well. Meanwhile you're borrowing on your credit card. Sooner or later, there's a knock at the door, out goes the car, out goes your house, out goes your marriage, out goes everything. Even people on Wall Street are saying that this is going to happen to us, because we cannot go on like this, and I've got another three and a half hour speech on the U.S. dollar, which I'm not going to give it tonight, but take it from the Chief Economist at Morgan Stanley, the big financial house in Wall Street, who says there's a 75 percent chance of a massive economic crisis in the United States within the next five years. And the reason is because we are not producing as much as we are buying. So, that's why a lot of these guys, the CEOs at General Motors and other places are on their way out. They are leaving a ship that they think may be sinking.

Now, the problem here is that you and I can't follow them, right, I mean, they can take their money, they still have a lot of assets here, so they're not moving that quickly, they've got to sell their factories, and they've got to go through all that other stuff, but they can take their money, and they can go anyplace, thanks to NAFTA and thanks to the WTO, and you and I can't follow them. So, we're here, they're there. They can move their factory to Mexico, or to China or wherever, and we can't go with them.

I just want to say one thing about this Chinese/Mexican thing. The problem is not the Mexican worker, the problem is not the Chinese worker, the problem is not the Brazilian worker, that's not who we're fighting. Who we're fighting is the guy who's got the boot of his heel on the necks of workers everywhere.

And I just want to show you something, did you pick the other two up? Now, you all know what NAFTA is, the North America Free Trade Agreement. Free trade between Canada, the United States and Mexico. And the way you read about that in the newspaper is that people say, "Well, who won? Did the U.S. win? Did Canada win? Did Mexico win?" And so it's like us against them. But in fact, the same chart that I showed you about the United States is the same chart that you see in Canada. The average Canadian has

produced much more than the average Canadian has gotten in wages. The same kind of gap between production, productivity and wages in Canada. Now would you put the other one up there, please?

So, Canada and Mexico, and the United States, so did Mexico win? Here's the chart on Mexico -- productivity up, wages down, and then flat. So whether it's Mexico, or Canada or the United States or China, what is going on is a world wide struggle between capital and labor. And by labor, I just don't mean labor unions. I mean everybody in this country who works for a living. And if you say, "Look at what percentage that is," if you take, I've done an analysis on this, if you take -- about the top, the bottom 80 percent of Americans depend on their paycheck every week. Above that, you're living on your wealth, you're living on the money that you're collecting on interest of stocks, or whatever. So you're talking about a majority of Americans.

Now, remember what I said before about class solidarity. What we've got is business class solidarity. We don't have the working class solidarity that we need. Eighty percent of us, in one way or another are in the working class. As you know, unions are less than 13 percent of the labor force, and the private sector is less than 10 percent. As unions shrink, economic issues like this shrink, and the social issues that the other side has exploited very, very cleverly like abortion, like homosexuality, like prayer in the schools -- they become the big issues, and they become the smoke screens for what's really going on. And the guy who wrote this book, *What's Wrong With Kansas?* has a wonderful image. He says it's like the family in Kansas, they turn on the television and they watch this program, and there's two lesbians kissing, and they go ape! And the politicians in Kansas go crazy, so they all go out and they vote for the Republicans, because the Republicans are against this kind of stuff. And what do the Republicans do? They cut taxes for the rich. That is, those two millionaire lesbians who are kissing on television!

All this stuff is a smokescreen, because that's the real issue. Somebody wants to define politics as who gets what, and don't ever forget that, if you forget everything that I've said here today, don't forget, it's who gets what. So, throw tomatoes at the television, go out and vote for these guys who are going to make those lesbian millionaires rich, and what does that do for us?

A friend of mine, Elaine Bernard, maybe you know her, she teaches at the Labor Center at Harvard, she's got a wonderful line about this, what's happened over the last 20 years in America. "It's not that we haven't had progress, the boss can't fire you because of your race, the boss can't fire you because of your sex, the boss can't fire you for your disability, the boss can just fire you for no reason at all." And that's where we are.

Now, it's not just Republicans, as I said before, I didn't get out of the sick bed tonight to come here to lie to you. The Democrats in Congress voted for these Bush tax cuts, without the Democrats we would have never had NAFTA, and we would have never had the WTO. So, it's not just the solution I'm telling you, elect Democrats. I'm a Democrat. Elect Democrats, but make sure you elect people who are going to represent your interests.

The Labor Movement also shares part of the blame. The job of us in the Labor Movement is to organize. And if there's a lack of class solidarity in America, we just can't blame it on everybody else. So, part of it is our fault. There are too many places in America where union halls are just old man's clubs. They mobilize before elections and then go back and get awake again a month or so before the next election.

How many people here worked on the last election? All right, so everybody here knows what I'm talking about. Labor did a great job of mobilizing, we did a crappy job of changing people's minds. It reminded, what we did last November was great, on the one hand, and it reminded me of a story that I'd forgotten about, that an old friend of mine told me about. The California election when Ronald Reagan beat Pat Brown in the late 1960's. He was working for the California state AFL-CIO, and he said, "We had a great program. We got lists of all the voters, we knocked on all the doors, we got everybody to the polls, we drove everybody there, and they all voted for Ronald Reagan." A little bit of that happened last time, we did a great job of mobilizing. Roger, in Pennsylvania, where I worked, was a genius. He had a lot of smart, talented, energetic people. The problem is they just, we just, showed up a month or two before the election, and on election day, Roger, do you remember this? Remember the guy that we walked around with who was from the UFCW? He was a UFCW member, worked in a supermarket in the Pennsylvania suburbs, and so we were talking there, and we

were talking about the Republicans and he said, "Well, you know, there's a lot of Republicans in my neighborhood. There's a guy who lives down the block," he says, "About once every three weeks he comes around and he says to me, 'You ought to be a Republican, you ought to be with us.'" And he laughed, and he said, "I'm not, I'm a union man, my father worked, was a union man, I'm not going to be a Republican." And then he said, "But you know, these guys got some good ideas." So I asked him, "Has anyone come around and ever asked you to find some people to join the Democratic party?" No. Has anyone ever come up to you, and asked, and engaged you in these kinds of ideas, in these kinds of discussions? He said, "No. As a matter of fact," he said, "If I was to ask someone to join the Democratic party, I wouldn't know what to say to them." So we did great on election day, we do great six weeks, eight weeks before, but we're not out there in the community talking politics to people 365 days a year the way they are. Too many people I know are sitting around talking about, "Well, who's going to be our next Presidential candidate? Is it going to be Hillary, or is it going to be -" Cut it out! It doesn't matter who our next candidate for President is, unless we are organized so that they need us more than we need them.

Eight years Bill Clinton was President of the United States, can you name one major thing that he did for working people? What did he do for the labor movement?

VOICE: NAFTA.

Right, NAFTA. Which was passed before he became President, he signed it, yes, he was honored to sign his name, I'll grant you that. We had a bowl, it was called Striker's Rights, you remember that one? Because as you know, you cannot legally strike in America. If they can replace you, permanently on the job, then you have no right to strike, right? You have the right to quit, but you don't have the right to strike. And if you went down and polled most Americans, 99.9 percent out of 100 would say, "Of course, the right to strike is, you know, every American's got that." But if you can be permanently replaced, you don't have that right. That was one thing the Labor Movement wanted out of Bill Clinton. And I'm a Democrat, one thing we wanted, and he said he couldn't deliver the two Arkansas Senators. That was it. It passed the House and we needed two Arkansas Senators, and he couldn't deliver that.

So, if you want to repeat that, then we should do the same things we've been doing for the last 20 years, business as usual. We need to think and act in a way that shows that we're really serious about changing this country. And I drive around the country sometimes at night, giving a talk or whatever, and I turn on the radio, and I hear all these right-wing radio talking shows, you know, all the right wing drunks and they're calling in and going on about labor unions and gays and homosexuals and all that stuff, and every once in a while I say, "Where are our drunks?"

You know, that doesn't mean we're going to solve this thing with a bottle of Jim Beam, but we need to get into the action of changing people's minds. That's the business theory. They're there, like this guy right down the block from the guy who worked in the UFCW, they're there all the time, because they're in the community. So, what does this mean?

Well, let me say something positive. What we're doing on Social Security right now I think is a welcome, fresh breeze. Over the last two months, organizing and mobilizing with labor and allied groups, have turned this thing around. George Bush is on the run, and if the Democrats in the Senate hold, if they hold and if they don't, you know, one or two peel off and give Bush what he wants or a little piece of what he wants, we're going to win this thing. If any Democratic Senator peels off, we should not only not deliver our money and our checks, we ought to take him out, that ought to be the number one priority.

If they're not a little scared of you then they're not going to deliver for you.

So, this could be a model, we could be building there a model for the next election, it may be that after 7 out of the last 10 losing campaigns for President, when the day after the election we're all saying, "No more business as usual." And then after Christmas, we go back to business as usual. Maybe it's changed now, and this is a good sign. What could be a model for the next Congressional election in '06. Connecting the dots for people. What I just said on health care, you can say on health care, you don't need me to make that speech. What I just said about workers' rights you can say, and you can say better than I can. What I said about outsourcing, you can say, and if you need a little help or information, you've got a website to go to, AFL-CIO website, call Peter, I

mean, he'll tell you, call me.

You can make this speech to the person next door, and I'll tell you, it's about talking to people. It's letters to the editor, you know what the Republicans do -- when Tom Delay says something at the floor of the Florida House, 24 hours later, Rush Limbaugh's got it on the radio. Forty eight hours, somebody in your hometown has got a letter to the editor, echoing the same thing. So, people are getting it from Rush, they're getting it from the letters to the editor, they're getting it from their next door neighbors. Is it any wonder, despite the good job we do at election day, too many vote for the other side.

So, it ought to be about talking to your neighbors, it ought to be about getting on the radio. There's a progressive, liberal network now, Air America. Think about writing letters to get it into your hometown. Why should it only be on three noted stations, why shouldn't it be carried by 1,000 stations? And Jim Hightower and other people are on that, it's OUR answer to Rush Limbaugh, good stuff, and funny, too, and humorous. Your union meetings need to be about politics. Democratic Congressman, well, I'll tell you, he's the Texas Congressman from the district that, he represents George Bush, and he said to me about a year ago, "If I had six people in my Congressional district who were just ordinary citizens who would get on the radio and take on these right wing jerks, I would be a lot more liberal and a lot more pro-labor."

So, that's where it's got to happen, it's got to happen in your home. You can make this kind of case, for health care, trade policy, practice on your right wing brother-in-law, anybody got somebody in the family that -- ?

(Audience expresses agreement.)

Right! Right! It's like Thanksgiving morning, and your spouse says, "Well, we gotta go to Momma's," and it's like, "Jesus, I don't want to hang out with that S.O.B.!" And she's like, "Come on, you gotta do it." Well, give yourself up with this guy, remember what he's been saying, so next Thanksgiving just let him have it. You will be surprised how happy you feel Thanksgiving night, you would be surprised. Never underestimate the happiness you can get from this kind of work.

And when a Congressman comes back to your District, and you know, the Congressman comes in, you're at the Union hall, someplace else, and people say, "Hey you've gotta come back, the Congressman's here," he comes in the door and he slaps everybody on the back, and he talks about the football game last night or he talks about the basketball game, cut him off. You don't need a Congressman to talk to you about sports. You want to talk to them about that. "Why is it that workers are not getting what they're producing?" Talk to him about healthcare, talk to him about the issues that are important, politics is not a spectator sport.

I'm going to leave you with my favorite story on this. It was told to me by a Canadian organizer in Halifax, and it's about the guy who's climbing up the mountain, and he gets all the way to the top and he slips and he falls, and he grabs out and he grabs a branch, and there he is, hanging over this canyon, 2,000 feet from death, so he screams up, and he says, "Is there anyone up there?" And the voice of the establishment says, "Yes, we're here." And he says, "Well, help me out!" And the voice says, "First, do you believe in us?" And he says, "Yeah, sure I believe in you." And the voice says, "Then let go of the branch." And he says, "Is there anybody else up there?"

Well, when you tell the story asking if there's anyone else up there, that's where you should be. Thank you.

DR. CURTIS: Thank you, Jeff.

So much of what you said has to do with communications, and communications framing, and advocacy. Our trustee who's leading our communications work is here, and we have a sign up sheet in the back, and we're very serious about providing you with the opportunity for communications training, for television school training, for you being in front of a camera and learning the techniques of getting interviewed, Lela will pretend she's Rush Limbaugh and ask nasty questions, and she'll teach you how to respond, and to turn things around in your favor. So, let's make that a link between what Jeff is saying, and what we can do is follow up.

Yvonne, as you all know, your professor, my dear colleague of many years from the Carter Administration, is now going to give us her wisdom on these simple, uncomplicated issues of the day.

PRESENTATION OF DR. YVONNE SCRUGGS-LEFTWICH

NATIONAL LABOR COLLEGE

A friend of mine says, "Everything to be said, has been said, but not everybody has said it." And it's now my turn.

I do want to try to take a slightly different cut at what both Alan and Jeff have said, because I firmly believe that unless we not only speak truth to power, but speak truth to ourselves, we're not going to get anywhere. And I've been increasingly impressed by the difficulty of wrapping my mind and my hands around the problem that we face, which is the disintegration of the base that under girds the American labor movement, and progressive and liberal efforts.

I had difficulty thinking about what I wanted to focus on, in addition to what I've written, you have that and you can read that, and part of the reason is because a lot has changed in the last couple of years, certainly since we got together and wrote this book. We were outraged that the election had been stolen, and that the person that had been handed it was not in our corner, and so we've now gone through another election, and we gave that away.

We were outraged that we didn't have a reinforced base, and now the base that we should call our own, is very confused. And very unsure of who we are. We talk about progressives, and progressive is a good word, there's nothing wrong with that. But increasingly, the more the radical right attacks, the more people who, in fact, are liberal look for some other label by which to know themselves. And so, there's progressive this, and progressive that, as though "liberal" is a bad word. And these kinds of ambiguities and pieces of confusion, I think are making it very difficult for us to do what is intellectually valid and intellectually acceptable, which is to identify the enemy, understand the problem, before you can build the strategy.

So, I just want to talk briefly about a few things that I think we're confused about, and that are making it difficult for us to really get down to specifics of a strategy for re-capturing and reshaping our agenda.

One of the things is that increasingly in the community of labor, we speak of ourselves as middle class, and not as working class. Now, I may be wrong, but it seems to me that if everyone is middle class, then where are the laborers? And what does the American Labor Movement see as its legitimate mandate?

There's nothing wrong with being middle class, but if we're all middle class, who is it we're going to organize? And how are we going to develop an identity which we can sell to people who are not members of the labor movement, which makes them feel apart. What's the difference between us and management, if we're all middle class? Who are those who are not middle class, are they not middle class by race? Not middle class by country of origin? Not middle class by language? By color? What is it that gives us a resource from which we can increase the strength of the American Labor Movement? And I don't think that until we can answer that question and we can address it with candor, that we're going to be able to get a strategy, outline the steps, do a strategic plan, say what the goals are, set some objectives which are capable of being accomplished, so that we can change the direction of our country.

I'm also concerned about how we're interpreting the whole faith-based initiative, and the values-based initiative, and I thought about this today, with Alison, she's in the back. Alison was talking with Claire Brown today, who was talking about her as the President of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute as the first woman to be the President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which by the admission of A. Phillip Randolph and all that he has written, was run largely -- not only out of his wife's pocketbook, because he did not have a job, he was an organizer, his wife had a beauty parlor and she helped to finance the A. Phillip Randolph institute, but the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and many, many labor unions at the beginning of our efforts were supported, and planned, and the details were paid attention to by women. And so I was thinking about the fact that a lot of the priorities in the so-called faith-based and value-based initiative are things that are essentially characterized by their fundamental dependence upon where women stand.

For example, choice. Anti-abortion, whether or not there should be birth control training, even the issue of gender and cross-gender marriage is focused on from the perspective of women, and not necessarily men. And so, if you have a faith-based agenda, and if you return to the fundamental teachings of the Bible, written a couple of thousand years ago by some very old men, before there was electricity or birth control. If

you use this as the context within which to talk about whether or not people have values, why, then, is it not possible that the very same, stringent, suppressions and controls of women become a part of the agenda and a part of the standard.

And so if you have, if you look at what's going on in the evangelical community, if you look at the televangelists, if you look at what they're doing with their programming, they all have suddenly having women's groups. And T.J. Jake has something that's called, I can never remember it, Woman Thou Art Loosed. And other groups that focus the values and the sense of identify of women, who are the purveyors of values and culture on a time and a standard which undermines their identity, and their ability to make their own decisions, and to continue this trajectory that has begun and is being seen, even in the Labor Movement for development of their own skills, for leadership and for moving into leadership positions. We have people who are here, those of you who are in the senior seminar, we have every semester, women, minorities who come and work on papers, and they write about their concern that they do not see enough people who look like them in leadership positions, not only in the Labor Movement, but in the halls of business and industry.

And so I'm wondering whether or not the subjection of drug abuse and poverty and unemployment and racism and poor health care and the lack thereof, all of these issues that used to be the core of the liberal agenda, and replacing that with concerns about same sex marriage, and about the right to choose. I'm wondering what is driving that, not only money, Jeff. But the change that has taken place in our country and in the world, which has threatened the accepted balance of power. And I think until we're willing to look at what under girds some of these things, it's not that everybody's suddenly in love with religion. It is that there are threats for which religion and the faith-based initiative provide a response that maintains, not only the power Jeff was talking about, the solidarity of the elite, but maintains the solidarity of the wealthy.

Within the labor movement and within liberal communities, we have not even been able to identify where the threat is for unraveling this control that is represented by the white house. And Jeff talks in his article about our need to do things ahead of time, that's not new, I know that Jeff knows that's not new. But the communities of poverty which need support ahead of time, to do education, not just to turn out the vote, but to educate people about what is in their best interests, so that when they go to vote they will vote that. This, as a strategy, is still not accepted even within the Labor Movement, even by the 527, even by those in the corporate community who say they care about poverty, they care about voter

participation, they care about civic participation and they care about people who are disenfranchised having a vote.

So, the understanding that in order to have change, you really do have to change, is something that the labor movement, and those who aren't sure if they're liberals or progressives, but don't like what's going on in the government, these are things that are going to have to be a part of the personal, the daily, agenda. And they're going to have to be consciously addressed, and accepted as evidence of change that is going to have, just like any system, is going to have to be absorbed, ameliorated, and that priorities are going to have to shift.

I know that we've talked with many of you, I've talked with many of you about what you're going to do when you leave here, and I think that the forum, this forum is one of the things that we have hoped will give you new things to think about, and new ways to make a difference. The thing that has been most remarkable to me has been the deafening silence. People are not saying, even in Congress, and I have no idea what's going on over there, but they certainly aren't talking about the things in ways that will make a difference.

And so, in the sense of grass roots participation, and organization, I think that each person is going to have to do, not only what Jeff talked about, but we're going to have to do it on the hard issues. And we're going to have to be willing to admit that we need to re-define the values that we, within the labor movement, and we within the liberal community, actually do support.

It is 25 minutes of 9 and I would like to turn this back to Sue Schurman, because we want to hear from you.

(Applause.)