

Elephants & Donkeys by Katherine R. Notley

Clinton-Gore currying green, white votes

High-level environmentalists announced the formation of "Environmentalists for Clinton/Gore" at a press conference in Washington on Sept. 22. Retiring Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth announced that, for the second time in its history, the Sierra Club was endorsing a candidate. Other speakers included Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson and former Audubon Society chairman Russell Peterson, both of whom claimed that environmentalism was good for the economy. Corporate lawyer Cathleen Douglas Stone blamed environmental problems on so-called overpopulation, and condemned funding cuts in foreign aid for population control.

Non-whites overseas are not the only ones at the back of the Clinton-Gore bus. According to a campaign profile from Little Rock, Arkansas, in the Sept. 20 *Sunday New York Times*, "some of his strongest supporters are complaining that Mr. Clinton has decided to sacrifice black voters' support in exchange for winning back the Democrats—most of them white—who voted for Ronald Reagan and George Bush. . . . [Jesse] Jackson supporters . . . say [Clinton's] bus tours, while successful and telegenic, have attracted a sea of white faces, but very few specific appeals have been made for black votes."

The *Times* quoted Rep. Charles B. Rangel: "It appears that we are on the back burner. . . . We are on an 'as needed' basis. . . . I feel pretty damn hurt and embarrassed."

Democratic critics compare Clinton's welfare reform rhetoric to George Bush's 1988 Willie Horton issue. Clinton is trying to "send code messages to white voters. Anti-wel-

fare . . . reads anti-black," according to these critics.

The evil of two losers

According to the Argentine daily *El Cronista* Sept. 15, when Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton was at Pam Harriman's fundraiser, in Northern Virginia's exclusive Hunt Country last month, he met one Wenceslao Bunge, a member of the oligarchic Bunge family of Argentina. Clinton lavished praise on the economic austerity policy of that country's President Carlos Menem, saying, "Argentina is carrying out an unprecedented experience on the continent," transforming the country into a democracy. Clinton then joked—was it a joke?—that "if we win the elections, I'm going to have to apply a program like yours to get us out of the recession."

If you don't know much about what Menem's policies would mean in translation by a Clinton White House, this is what MIT economist and former World Bank employee Stanley Fisher told the Argentine daily *Página 12* about the wonders of Menem's "fiscal adjustment": "Many people say that the reforms in the East bloc need a Pinochet, but I say that maybe what they really need is a Menem, although I don't know if another one can be found. He's quite a unique personality."

Back in Washington, George Bush conveyed his sympathy on Sept. 13 for embattled Brazilian President Fernando Collor through his Economics Minister Marcilio Marques Moreira, at a White House reception for those attending the International Monetary Fund annual meeting. Collor, no slouch at implementing the IMF's austerity program, is facing possible

impeachment and criminal charges for bribery, conspiracy, and falsifying documents.

Item. George Bush has referred to Collor as "my kind of guy."

Al Gore and the Patagonian sheep

San Francisco television news reporter Brian Hackney recently put to rest the wild claim popularized in Sen. Al Gore's environmental scare book, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology in the Human Spirit*, that excessive ultraviolet light penetrating the lower atmosphere through the ozone hole was responsible for epidemic blindness among sheep in Patagonia.

Hackney, who produced a seven-minute exposé of the ozone scare for San Francisco station KGO-TV on Aug. 21, traveled to Argentina with the radical ecologist group Greenpeace to cover what it had hoped to be a major film "documentary" on the sheeps' blindness.

Hackney brought back an eyeball from one of the sheep and had it analyzed at a leading university medical center. The diagnosis was that the sheep suffered from conjunctivitis, or pink eye, a highly infectious inflammation of the membrane covering the inside of eyelids and front of the eyeball.

On learning of the report, Hackney's supervisor at KGO called Greenpeace to warn them not to go out with the story linking the sheep blindness to the ozone hole.

Nonetheless, based on unsubstantiated scare stories like these, President George Bush speeded up the timetable for phasing out CFCs—the crucial refrigerants that are blamed for causing thinning in atmospheric ozone—from 2000 to 1995.