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JULY 2000

Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair

VOL. 7, NO.13

## Al Gore Special Issue

### DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S DREADFUL NOMINEE

- A Lifetime of Double Standards
- "Friend" of Gays Voted with Helms on Anti-Gay Bills
- "Friend" of Labor Attacked Picketing Rights
- "Friend" of Choice Fierce Foe of Choice
- "Friend" of Nature, Friend of Big Oil, Big Coal, Big Timber, Big Sugar
- "Foe" of Arms Race, Friend of MX and Star Wars
- "Foe" of Racism Friend of Racist Schools

### Plus

- Dick Cheney: He's Dumb

## Gore: the Bottom Line

**A**l Gore distills in his single person the disrepair of liberalism in America today, and almost every unalluring feature of the Democratic Party. He did not attain this distinction by accident but by sedulous study from the cradle forward. A lad, and then a man who has never spent a minute of his life in ignorance or uncertainty as to where the next meal was coming from, or how the next mortgage payment might be met, Gore was nurtured to power by parents certain of his destiny. At his father's knee he learned the liberal idiom of the New Deal, and he has spent his adult life using the rhetoric to destroy the substance. At Harvard he became a disciple of Martin Peretz, the man who would later guide the liberal New Republic into neoconservative support for the Reagan doctrine.

Like a street mountebank fluttering a handkerchief to distract attention from his sleights of hand, Gore has always used his proficiency with the language of liberalism to mask an agenda utterly in concert with the desires of the Money Power. Nowhere is this truer than in his supposed environmentalism, which nicely symbolizes the chasm that has always separated Gore's professions from his performance. He denounces the rape of nature, yet has connived at the strip-mining of Appalachia and, indeed, of terrain abutting one of Tennessee's most popular state parks. In other arenas, he denounces vouchers, yet sends his children to the private schools of the elite. He put himself forth as a proponent of ending the nuclear arms race, yet served as midwife for the MX missile. He offers himself as a civil libertarian, yet has been an accomplice in drives for censorship and savage assaults on the Bill of Rights. He parades himself as an advocate of campaign finance reform, then withdraws to the White House to pocket for the Demo-

cratic National Committee \$450,000 handed to him by a gardener acting as carrier pigeon for the Riady family of Indonesia. He and wife Tipper were ardent smokers of marijuana, yet he now pushes for harsh sanctions against marijuana users.

It's hard to find noble moments in Gore's political career. Such was not the case with his father. Albert Sr. stood against the war in Vietnam, was a prime architect of the ABM Treaty (which his son is trying to undo) and a proponent of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Although Albert Sr. reproached himself in later life for having lacked courage on the civil rights issue, he did tell Strom Thurmond to shove it when the latter approached him on the floor of the Senate with his Southern Manifesto, calling on the states to resist court-ordered demands for desegregation.

There are Oedipal cross-currents in Gore's make-up. Of the obvious signs of healthful filial rebellion there have been no traces in the man. But indirectly the spoor is there. Push Gore into any corner and he'll do the wrong thing, which he'll then dignify as the consequence of an intense moral crisis. Gore is brittle, often the mark of the overly well-behaved, perfect child. When things start to go wrong, he unravels fast. Who can forget the panicked performance when his image of moral rectitude shattered at the impact of the fundraising scandals associated with the Buddhist temple in Los Angeles? Then, faced with evidence of illegal fundraising calls made from his White House office and surrounded by an unwontedly hostile press, all Gore could do was bleat out the foolish phrase that "no controlling authority" had prevented him from doing so. When Dan Quayle and later Bill Bradley taxed him with the antiabortion stance he (Gore continued on page 5)

# Our Little Secrets

## THE REAL AL GORE

Read any biography or profile of Al Gore and there are always the childhood sources in Carthage or St. Albans, the classmates at Harvard, the fellow soldiers in Vietnam, the colleagues on The Tennessean. But, aside from Tom Downey, rarely on the record does one find any kindly remarks from the representatives or senators with whom Gore worked on the Hill for sixteen years. What one does find are fellow Democrats taking swipes at him. The consensus on the Hill seems to have formed early that he was a grandstander, a loner, a backstabber, someone who would use his pedigree to get favored committee assignments from the men who ruled the House: Dan Rostenkowski, Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright and John Dingell. Iowa's Senator Tom Harkin used to call him "Prince Albert".

When Gore was hit by the Buddhist temple campaign fund scandal after the 1996 election the White House cast about desperately for a Democrat in Congress to go on the morning shows and defend the vice president. No one stepped forward. Finally the person most closely resembling a friend in the Senate, John

Breaux, explained to a reporter, "Warm and fuzzy he's not." Another Democrat told Gore Vidal, "Around here he's what we call 'a glory boy'. He gets to the House and starts running for the Senate. He gets to the Senate and start running for the White House. There's no time left to do any of the real work the rest of us have to do."

Gore's style was to pick out safe issues on which to cut a posture. He'd digested the lessons of his own master's thesis, that television had shifted the balance of power from the Congress to the Executive branch. Mindful of appearances and remembering JFK's tan Gore began taking a sunlamp with him on his travels.

## GORE'S TV POSTURING

Gore would seize on an issue that could be easily exported to the Sunday talk shows, such as children's nightwear treated with Tris, a flame retardant that turned out to be carcinogenic. Those particular hearings in May of 1977 were the first to bring young Rep Gore onto the network news shows, and he made full use of the opportunity. "Did it trouble you," he howled theatrically at one industry executive, "that the children of this country might have tumors, carcinogenic or otherwise, produced by the chemical that would be used in all this sleepwear?"

From perilous nightwear he turned his attention to infant formula, another sure-fire TV grabber, where he and the shapely Tipper discoursed on the virtues of breastfeeding. On the heels of fiery sermons against Nestle for its infant formula came Gore's efforts to enact a national organ transplant database. This talent for converting minor issues into major TV opportunities was no doubt what prompted Gore's enthusiasm for Clinton's pollster Dick Morris when the latter arrived to bail out the Clinton White House in 1995 and 1996.

The legislative venue for Gore's grandstanding was the House Commerce Committee's subcommittee on oversight and investigation. Gore had lobbied strongly to be appointed to this subcommittee, correctly assaying its screen-time potential. In short order he developed an inquisitorial style, matched off the floor by his mercilessly abusive treatment of his

staff. His sponsor was the powerful Michigan Democrat John Dingell, the auto industry's greatest friend on Capitol Hill and later the most virulent opponent of clean air legislation. Dingell can himself be a pitiless interrogator and evidently saw Gore's potential. Gore would describe himself later as Dingell's spear carrier.

Gore's skills at self-promotion carried his name into the news and afforded him a certain national reputation as a crusading liberal. But a colleague in the House described Gore's posturing to the Washington Post as a brand of faux populism: "When you're investigating Love Canal there isn't anyone who is rooting for Hooker Chemical. Yeah, he was a fighter for the working men and women of this country when it involved notoriously bad actors. But if it's an important corporate interest he was a little less decisive."

## GORE SELLS OUT ON NUKED KID

One example of Gore's prudence came in 1981 when a case was brought to the attention of Rep Gore, by now chairman of the subcommittee, about allegations that children dying of leukaemia had been the subject of radiation experiments at a lab in the Oak Ridge complex in the late 1960s. One such child was Dwayne Sexton, who'd spent some of his final days being subjected to major doses of radiation in a room which also housed 50 cages of mice undergoing the same treatment. Reports of the course of the radiation doses were secretly remitted to NASA, which was interested in the possible effects of solar flares on its astronauts.

But when Gore finally held a hearing on this appalling breach of medical ethics, the proceedings were markedly more demure than the robust grandstanding against perilous nightwear. On one side was only Mary Sue Sexton, Dwayne's working-class mother. On the other was a brigade of Oak Ridge doctors and high-ups. Congressman Gore, well aware of the weight of Oak Ridge in the political economy of Tennessee was extremely meek, sparing the doctors his usual pitiless interrogations. The hearing was brief and went nowhere. Mrs Sexton continued to write to Gore, asking for justice. He never replied. In 1994, amid a new Department of Energy investigations into the radiation experiments, 60 Minutes ran a

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Published twice monthly except  
August, 22 issues a year:

\$40 individuals,  
\$100 institutions/supporters  
\$30 student/low-income

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## ***Time after time in the 80s, Senator Al Gore voted with Senator Jesse Helms to bash gays and immigrants. He also worked with "B-1 Bob" Dornan to protect racist schools.***

segment on Dwayne Sexton and 19 other children, noting the failure of Gore to answer Mrs Sexton's letters. Vice President Gore declined 60 Minutes' request for an interview or statement.

### **HOW GORE SCREWED LABOR**

At the substantive legislative level Gore remained emphatically on the center-right. Take the issue that perhaps defines the Democratic Party's social mission more than any other: labor rights. In the dawn of the Carter presidency, with Democrats controlling both houses, a bill came before the House aimed at expanding unions' picketing rights. Famously in America, one has the right to strike (barely) but not the right to win, because picketing—a vital component of any serious strike—is so circumscribed by legal restrictions as to be effectively useless in many cases as a coercive tool in a fight against employers. So this vote was a big one. The AFL-CIO felt confident of victory, but it missed the fact that newly arrived Democrats like Gore felt no loyalty to labor and were intent on advertising that disposition to their business contributors. Gore provided one of the crucial votes that turned back labor's bill.

### **GORE'S LIES ON CHOICE**

As a congressman, Gore spoke of his belief in "the fetus's right to life". He was a relentless supporter of the Hyde amendment, which banned federal funding for abortions for poor women. In one early version of Hyde's bill there was language allowing exceptions to the ban in the case of rape. Gore voted against that.

The most far reaching of all the measures dreamed up by the conservative right to undercut Roe v Wade was an amendment put forward by a Michigan Republican, Mark Siljander, in 1984. It carried a one-two punch. First, it defined the fetus as a person from the moment of conception. Second, it denied federal funding to any hospital or clinic that performed an abortion. Gearing up for his Senate run that year, Gore was one of seventy-four Demo-

crats to vote for Siljander's ultimately unsuccessful measure.

Those votes returned to haunt Gore as his political ambitions went national and he was bidding for more support than he ever needed in the 4th District or even the entire Volunteer State. By 1988 he was brazenly rewriting his political biography. He and his staff were well aware that his votes against choice of only four years earlier would be brought up by his opponents. "Since there's a record of that vote", an aide told US News & World Report in March of 1988, "in effect what we have to do is deny, deny, deny."

The problem returned briefly in 1992 and again in the Democratic primaries in 2000, when Bill Bradley, challenging Gore for the nomination, used the occasion of a debate in the Apollo Theater in Harlem, to flourish and then read out a letter Gore had written to a Tennessee constituent in 1984, in which he had stated: "It is my deep personal conviction that abortion is wrong. I hope that some day we will see the current outrageously large number of abortions drop sharply. Let me assure you that I share your belief that innocent human life must be protected and I have an open mind on how to further this goal."

### **THE GORE/HELMS GAY BASHING TEAM.**

One unlovely hoof-print after another tracks its way across Gore's legislative voting record. In 1980, when the IRS proposed new regulations denying tax-exempt status to private schools that barred black students, Gore was among those in Congress supporting Robert (B-1 Bob) Dornan of California who put up a bill trying to undermine the regulations.

In 1980 Gore also voted for an amendment prohibiting the Legal Services Corporation from assisting homosexuals whose rights were denied because of their sexual orientation. As a member of the US Senate Gore backed three anti-homosexual measures put up by his colleague, and on on this issue, comrade in arms, Jesse Helms. In August 1986 Gore voted for a Jesse Helms amendment forcing the Dis-

trict of Columbia to overturn its law prohibiting health, life and disability insurance corporations from using the new HIV test to reject applicants for insurance.

A year later Gore voted for a Helms amendment requiring HIV testing for immigrants, effectively prohibiting HIV+ people from settling in the US. In August 1988 he voted for another Helms amendment, this time the "Fair Housing Bill". The amendment prohibited the bill's anti-discrimination section from protecting "an individual solely because that individual is a transvestite." During the anti-gay, pro-censorship hysteria surrounding a Robert Maplethorpe exhibit in September 1989, Gore joined his fellow Senators in unanimously approving a Jesse Helms bill attacking the National Endowment for the Arts for its funding for the exhibit. Gay Weekly from Gore's home state summed up the matter quite well: "Even our own Tennessee Senators, Jim Sasser and Albert Gore, Jr., did nothing to try to stop the vicious North Carolinian's bigoted, dangerous foolishness."

### **AHOY COUNTERPUNCHERS!**

Some CounterPunchers have been calling Becky Grant, our business managers, worrying that they haven't been getting their issues on time. Confession from the editors. We've been finishing our book on Al Gore and have slipped a bit behind on our schedule. But there's a plus side to this. Normally we don't publish in August. But this year we'll be at the Democratic convention and will be putting out an August issue right after it. So the issue you're reading right now is for the whole of July. You don't miss an issue.

Gore: A User's Manual, by CounterPunch editors Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St Clair is being published by Verso and will be on sale by Labor Day. Call us if you want order a copy in advance at our usual big CounterPunch discount call Becky now at 1-800-840-3683. This is not only an unsparing look at the man who would be President. It is a raw history of the Clinton-Gore administration. No Counter-Puncher's bookshelf should be without it. CP

## ***It Takes One to Know One*** **The Truth About** **Cheney: He's Dumb**

**T**hough he is only 59, Cheney has been around the national political scene for more than 30 years. He was the youngest chief of staff ever, for our greatest president, Gerald Ford. Then, after Carter chased Ford out of the White House, Cheney retreated to Wyoming. He wasn't there long. Cheney ran for Congress, and became part of a nasty triumvirate of Wyoming legislators that ran rampant across the West through the 1980s; including the vile Alan Simpson and Malcolm Wallop, a political narcoleptic, who was long considered by staffers the second dumbest member of the senate, an eyelash behind Idaho's Steve Symms.

Cheney rose rapidly up the ranks of the Republican leadership. In his second term, he became leader of the party's influential policy committee and later Minority Whip. As a congressman his record was unremittingly rightwing, against the ERA, for funding the contras, the Mujahiddeen and UNITA, against affirmative action and Head Start, against abortion, against the Endangered Species Act and for selling off public lands and oil reserves. He even went so far as to accuse Ronald Reagan of "selling out to Rostenkowski" on the 1986 tax bill.

Cheney was briefly considered as a replacement for James Watt as secretary of interior. But Cheney rightly thought he could do more damage in the House. And, as a member of the House Interior Committee, he did—pushing for increased oil and gas development in wilderness areas, securing private water rights over public lands and blocking several wilderness proposals in the northern Rockies.

The big prize in those days was the shale-oil deposits along the Rocky Mountain front, much of it in Wyoming, which Cheney tried to open up for development backed by billions in federal handouts—but when oil prices stabilized in the mid-80s the scheme largely fell apart. Cheney and Simpson also tried to micro-manage Yellowstone Park and succeeded in forcing the Park Service to build the Grant Village resort complex on Yellowstone

Lake in habitat park biologists considered vital for the survival of the park's dwindling population of grizzlies.

"Cheney's often mistaken for a deep-thinker", a longtime Republican staffer on the Hill tells us. "He's not. He's just a plodding thinker. His long pauses and deliberate mannerisms disguise the paucity of his political philosophy. It wasn't that Cheney concocted reasons to vote against the ERA or the South African sanctions. He actually bought into the pr. He truly believed that the ERA was going to force women into combat and men's bathrooms. He truly believed that if he ever got out, Nelson Mandela was a programmed tool of the Kremlin who would turn Johannesburg into a black Havana, after purging the country of all whites, if he ever got out.

***"Cheney's often mistaken for a deep-thinker", a longtime Republican staffer on the Hill tells CounterPunch. "He's not. He's just a plodding thinker."***

We called him Cheney the Credulous. But always behind his back. He had an explosive temper."

Cheney was on the verge of becoming the minority leader of the House in 1989, when Bush picked him to become secretary of defense. CounterPunch has seen an internal Pentagon profile of Cheney, prepared after the 1992 election, which describes Cheney as always preferring weapons acquisition over military personnel and backing big-ticket systems over more mundane and practical armaments. "Clinton rented out the Lincoln Bedroom to Hollywood starlets," quipped one House staffer. "But Cheney let Lockheed execs play around in the war room."

Cheney is given credit for running the Gulf War. But his skills as a military strategist haven't inspired comparisons to Scipio Africanus at the Pentagon, where during the war he turned over much of the responsibility to his assistant secretary of defense. Instead, Cheney devoted most of his time to frequent briefings of Congress, sessions that one staffer described as be-

ing "largely a horrorshow. Cheney tended to dwell on the gruesome efficiency of the bombing campaign and hyping the smart-bomb technology with piles of data that later proved bogus."

Cheney's most decisive action in the Gulf War had little to do with mustering support and everything to do with covering up the fact that Iraq's army of conscripts posed little threat to US forces. The cat was let out of the bag by Gen. Michael Dugan, chief of the Air Force, who, on the eve of the war, told a Pentagon reporter that the Iraqis were unable to defend themselves and that the US was basically doing the bidding of the Israelis. Cheney fired Dugan immediately.

Cheney's wife, Lynne, is one of Washington's top talking heads and a cohort of CNN's Sunday edition of Crossfire. She wrote a PhD dissertation at the University of Wisconsin on the influence of Kant on the poetry of Matthew Arnold. After Cheney left public office, Lynne kept the family name in the political spotlight, primarily as a crusader against any attempt by public schools to reach out to black and

Hispanic children. As Bill Bennett (apparently oblivious to how it echoed Bob Haldeman's sentiments about Martha Mitchell) put it: "she's hard to muzzle."

For the past five years, Cheney has been pulling down more than \$1.3 million a year as CEO of Halliburton, the Bechtel of the oil services industry, a company that builds drilling rigs and pipelines for the big oil companies. Halliburton made a killing in Kuwait cleaning up the mess from the Gulf War and rebuilding the infrastructure of the its petroleum industry. When Cheney came on board in 1995, he immediately began a cost-cutting regime that ending up with more than 9,000 workers thrown on the streets.

Cheney's nomination has effectively mooted any RNC plans to attack Gore on playing footsie with the Chinese. In 1993, Halliburton secured a multi-billion dollar joint services contract with the Chinese National Petroleum Company to develop and operation oil and gas fields and pipelines in China. The deal was greased by the late Ron Brown and former Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary. CP

(Gore continued from page 1)  
held for most of his Congressional career, earning him an 84 percent Right To Life rating, Gore opted for rigid denial, claiming preposterously that he'd always been pro choice.

"He was an easy child, he always wanted to please us", his mother, Pauline, once said of him. This desire to please, to get the attention of often-absent parents, has been an incentive to exaggerate accomplishments. He claimed that his investigative reports at The Tennessean had "got a bunch of people indicted and sent to jail". Not true. He claimed that he and Tipper were the models for the couple in Eric Segal's book *Love Story*, a claim Segal was forced to deny, saying he was puzzled by Gore's assertions.

He is a stretcher in every sense of the word, either with full-blown fibs or the expansion of some modest achievement into impossible vainglory. He claimed to have created the Internet, a ludicrous pretension, although he would have been safe and truthful in describing his early support for federal funding for the Internet. He claimed to have been the author of the earned income tax credit, which had been enacted two years before Gore entered Congress.

When Gore takes an action it's as if the body politic is part of his family. The action is portrayed as having at its root some personal epiphany or trauma. He advertises crisis, depicts an interlude of anguish and claims to have achieved a higher level of moral awareness. There are the family romances with the truth. In interviews, in his book *Earth in the Balance* and, famously, in his acceptance speech at the 1992 Democratic convention, Gore shamelessly milked the accident in which his 6-year-old son was badly hurt from being struck by a car. Gore described how, amid his anguish beside the boy's hospital bed, he peered into his own soul and reproached himself for being an absentee dad. He narrated his entry into family therapy. But Tipper and the children didn't see more of him as a consequence of all that. Despite that dark night of the soul beside Albert III's bed, he plunged even deeper into Senate business and spent whatever hours of leisure were available holed up away from the family, writing *Earth in the Balance* in his parents' old penthouse in the Fairfax Hotel. Soon after, he accepted Clinton's invitation to run for vice-president in '92.

The epiphanies end when the family

## ***He claimed to be the author of the Earned Income Tax Credit, which had been enacted two years before Gore entered Congress.***

drama goes sour. When Albert III was busted for pot at St. Albans, the Gores successfully lobbied the Washington press not to run with the story. When St. Albans publicly disciplined little Albert, the Gores yanked him out of the school and enrolled him in Sidwell Friends, the elite Quaker-run prep school attended by Chelsea Clinton. When Kareena was at Cathedral, she was, by her admission, pretty wild. Sarah, the third daughter, was busted for under-age drinking at a Washington party. But Al Gore learned nothing from these experiences as a father, and preaches self-righteously about the need for the "personal responsibility" of errant children, signing on to vicious laws that hit minority teenagers hardest.

To a Democratic convention in Chicago in 1996, Gore described in vivid emotional detail the death of his sister, Nancy, from cancer. Many thought his description a wholly inappropriate and exploitative way of advocating a policy—in this case, reduction in smoking.

That remembered psychodrama was also bogus. "She couldn't speak", Gore proclaimed to the crowd in Chicago. "But I felt clearly I knew she was forming a question, 'Do you bring me hope?' All of us had tried to find whatever new treatment, new approach might help, but all I could do was to say back to her with all the gentleness in my heart, 'I love you.' And then I knelt by her bed and held her hand and in a very short time, her breathing became labored and then she breathed her last breath. And that is why until I draw my last breath, I will pour my heart and soul into the cause of protecting our children from the dangers of smoking."

CounterPunch was the first to point out, a week later, that Nancy's death from cigarette smoking scarcely had as brisk an effect on her brother as he claimed. After she breathed her last, Al Gore went on accepting tobacco company money, and went on accepting government subsidies for his own tobacco allotments in Tennessee. He stayed addicted to his tobacco allotments and tobacco industry cash for seven long years after she died before finally claiming that he'd tested clean.

Confronted with this protracted time lag between resolve and the consummation of that resolve, Gore said it had been "a process of growth". "I felt the numbness", he said, "that prevented me from integrating into all aspects of my life the implications of what that tragedy really meant."

As for the Gores' favored drug of the early 1970s, in 1999 about 700,000 people were arrested for marijuana offenses, about 87 percent for possession. That is more than double the number in the early 1990s. Of the federal prison population of 150,000, about 60 percent are in for drug law violations, the largest proportion for marijuana. Drug offenders comprise about a quarter of the 1.2 million in state prisons and about the same fraction of the 500,000 in local jails. Maybe Gore should feel a special kinship for these inmates; instead he cries out for punishment.

Al Gore knows all about addiction. His sister was unable to kick the cigarette habit even as she was breathing with one cancerous lung. He knows about congenital dispositions. His wife, Tipper, is a depressive. He knows about therapy too, having communed with shrinks when he was hav-

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ing the midlife sag that partly prompted *Earth in the Balance*.

Suppose that some day tobacco becomes a criminalized drug. Booze too. Suppose Sister Nancy were still around and got put in prison for manslaughter while driving under the influence of alcohol (an option under current law). How would Brother Al feel if she were given more jail time, because she couldn't quit smoking? How would he feel if she were out on parole, then locked back up because nicotine or alcohol showed up in her blood in a routine test when she applied for a job? How would he like it if someone told

didate for the presidency that year, Hubert Humphrey. It was a hilarious demolition of bankrupt liberalism couching itself in all the tumid homilies of a man who genuinely did believe that the world could be improved by good intentions.

The Democratic Party has moved onward and downward since then, and this is not surprising since the center of gravity of the entire system has moved to the right. Studying the economic record of the Clinton administration the economist Robert Pollin has rightly pointed out that "a Republican incumbent of one period can easily be less reactionary than a Demo-

in Tennessee's congressional district in 1976 to the present day.

Occasionally, at least near the beginning of his first term, Bill Clinton remembered his better self, and felt a momentary spasm of remorse as he betrayed it. Gore has never had a better self to remember. At every turn in the Clinton years the vice president consistently pushed policy to the right. Gore was for surrender to Wall St in the very first days, in the spring of 1993. His "Reinventing Government" initiatives of 1993 and 1994 were a savage attack on minority protections in the civil service, and in fact wrought every-

## ***Together with Dick Morris, Al Gore applied the Clinton Doctrine at the practical level, pushing Clinton into signing the Welfare Bill.***

Tipper that she should just "snap out" of her depression?

Gore is both credulous and cynical at the same time. A child sick with whooping cough conjures up for him global epidemics. A hot summer in Indiana prompts him to cry that the earth is on fire. His son's injured body in a hospital bed is projected as a metaphor for the ailments of mankind. His wife's depression is magnified into a national campaign to persuade Americans they are all depressed. Al Gore never projects optimism. The Malthusian doomsayers he studied at Vanderbilt remain his models. His favorite mode, adopted in *Earth in the Balance*, is as the herald of catastrophe.

In 1968, Robert Sherill and Harry Ernst published a short book, *The Drugstore Liberal*, on the Democratic can-

crat in the next, as we have repeatedly seen from the data - Nixon presiding over higher wages and less poverty than Clinton." The Democratic Party platform for 2000, drafted by Gore's people, would have been unimaginable to Humphrey or Nixon.

Presidents are captives of history and national circumstance. Yet they can make their mark, for better or for worse. What does Al Gore have in him to accomplish? What sort of accomplishments would they be? To many, his record is blurry. Yet the evidence is there for us to form a judgement.

For the past few months the editors have CounterPunch have been completing *Al Gore: A User's Manual*, published by Verso and in bootstores after Labor Day. We began with a disposition against Gore, but have been surprised at how bad Gore's political record is from his first race

thing that the Republicans had never dared do with the Grace Commission and the Office on Competitiveness.

Together with Dick Morris, Gore applied the Clinton Doctrine (work with the Republicans against liberal Democrats on the Hill) at the practical level. On every account of it, he was the man who pushed Clinton into signing the welfare bill.

Find a cruel policy and Al Gore has pushed for it: workfare, discrimination against gays, denial of abortion to poor women, mandatory sentences, "sufficiency language" to destroy the northwest forests, denial of cheap, generic drugs to fight AIDS in South Africa, sanctions against Iraq, bombing of Serbia. Find a policy that hands money to the Defense Department, to the wealthy, and you'll find Al Gore pushing it along. CP

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***Special Issue on Al Gore***