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Black Faces in High Places

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

A right-wing Republican angrily wrote me a letter last week, something to the effect like: "why don't you Blacks just give it up about charges of fraud [...]... your man [Gore] just lost, and hey Bush has now appointed Black people to high positions in this administration, which shows he is not a racist." Well, yes, the Grinch (aka as George W. Bush) has now appointed a number of Black and Brown faces to his Presidential Cabinet, and we are supposed to believe that this "diversity" means something to moderate our views of him for the theft of the election and installation of a racist government. It is supposed to show Black people how "compassionate" this conservative is, just as his father, George Sr., introduced the line about "a kinder, gentler America". Well, we ain't impressed, and you haven't done nothing!

Because Blacks like Colin Powell, the new Secretary of State, and Condoleezza Rice, the new National Security Advisor, are in fresh political positions in a Bush Presidential administration does not mean that the government is a progressive one, or bodes well for our community. They are Black right-wingers and political hacks, who will do nothing but carry out the strategy of Bush and the most reactionary elements on Wall Street

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Retrieved on April 24, 2012 from libcom.org

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who back him. They are puppets, mere window-dressing to somehow pacify critics in the Black community. It won't work.

This election exposed the government (and its electoral system) to the masses of Black people (and even many White progressives) in a way that nothing has since the Vietnam war. People are beginning to understand that the popular vote really does *not* count, and that Soouthern racists will stoop to anything to deprive Black people of the right to vote. Hey it's only been since 1964 that Black people could vote in the South at all. They used to subject Black people to all manner of treachery, even murder, to prevent the Black community from using the vote to change the status quo. Therefore, it was a key objective of the civil rights movement, led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other organizations in the 1950's and 60's. It was an important objective for a people suppressed for centuries, but it will not free us, and now millions understand this for the first time. It is simply too easy to take away the right to vote, and the same corrupt economic and political forces will remain in power anyway. Sure they may use a Liberal government this time, or a Conservative government the next time, but the Wall Street capitalists are still in power.

As an aside, it is my understanding that it was Wall Street that told Jessie Jackson to shut his mouth about talk of a "velvet legal coup" by the Supreme Court, and leading demonstrations which would paralyze the country. Almost immediately after getting his edict from his Wall Street bosses, he shut his mouth, and even went so far as to "congratulate" Bush on his "win." Such a person is treacherous, and cannot be trusted. He cannot provide strong leadership when it is needed in the fight against racism or fascism, and he should be denounced in no uncertain terms. SNCC used to have a saying: "Move on over, or we'll move over you!"

The "Negro" leaders, whether conservative or liberal, need to be exposed and supreceded. The masses themselves have to

spring into action, and not wait for any self-appointed leaders. We are the ones who will be starved by budget cuts, tortured in prison, shot down in the streets by racist cops, and forced to live lives of quiet desperation. Perhaps the demonstration in Washington, D.C. on January 20th, Bush's inaguration day, will be the beginning of a mass protest campaign to last throught the dark years of his reign.