

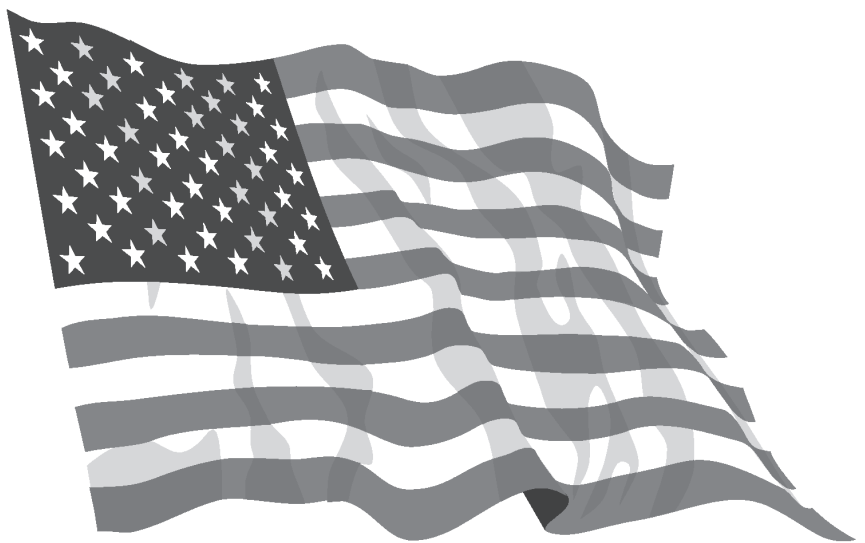
How to beat a Bush

*In the build-up to the US presidential elections, the Bush administration came under severe criticism from AFL-CIO. The **Labour Bulletin** spoke to AFL-CIO representative **Bill Lucy** about the upcoming elections, the Bush administration and the rise in black unemployment in the US.*

Bill Lucy of AFL-CIO told delegates at Cosatu's national congress: 'We face the same challenges in different forms. We have both learned through painful experience that the presence of democracy does not mean the absence of poverty, oppression, hopelessness and powerlessness.

We now have a government (in the US) of the rich, by the rich and for the rich'. He said all the good work done by the Clinton administration has been wiped out in just three years. The Bush administration adopted a similar philosophy to Regan's era with massive tax cuts and other measures. As a result the Bush era (or error) has seen a sharp rise in unemployment in general but more specifically amongst African Americans where the rate rose to 11,1% from 6% during Clinton.

Until the Clinton era unemployment was in the region of 3,7% while 22 million new jobs were created through various projects. During the first nine months of Bush, one million jobs were lost (this was even before 11 September). By this year an additional two million jobs have been lost. Job losses, he said, have occurred in the key sectors of the economy. This process has been speeded up through



privatisation and commercialisation at a state and local government level. The current government, he said, supported a policy of privatising 850 000 federal sector jobs. During the month of June this year, 390 000 jobs were lost, with almost half of them being amongst blacks.

Lucy said the machinery of the trade union movement was being actively used to ensure Bush was defeated. 'I am convinced we can beat

Bush in terms of performance and philosophy. Workers have to ask themselves if they were better off now or three years ago during the Clinton administration'. Aside from rising unemployment and other social ills, there has been a resurfacing of concerns around affirmative action. 'The Bush administration comes down harshly on state sponsored terrorism but it uses state sponsored racism,' he said.

18