

water, hazardous products, deceptive advertising and other scams ,are not damaging our quality of life and family budgets.

The platform does no more for workers than it does for consumers. Its weak language on the Mexican Free Trade Agreement fails to protect working people or their families from runaway jobs. Tough provisions to put the well-being of American communities above the profits of mega-national companies were also gaveled into oblivion.

More than twenty amendments were offered to the platform. These were not wild-eyes proposals to radicalize the Party. Hardly. The amendments fell well within the philosophical framework of the party of Roosevelt and Kennedy. They included establishment of a one-hundred thousand member civilian conservation corps, an immediate ban on clearcutting ancient forests, achieving specific energy efficiency goals, strengthening organizing rights of workers and raising the minimum wage a dollar.

At the end of the day the committee finally brought up the "Humility Agenda" ... and it was promptly voted down. This 11-point plank was aimed at trespoding to voter disgust and alienation with the political process. For example, it would ahve required television stations to provide free air time to qualified candidates and called on government itself to register all voters and make election day a holiday.

The Party should lead by example and break through the cynicism so the "Humility Agenda" also called for rolling back the congressional pay raise, term limits, state referndum and recall procedures, and a \$100 limit on campaign contributions. In short, the Party should be on the side of real change and open up our democracy.

But the Platform Commitee did not take kindly to dissent or opposing points of view. Their job, it appears, was to protect the Party from clear and measurable commitemnts on which it might be judged. Like aging apparatchiks, the Party custodians recoiled with the alarm and irritation at the merest prospect of change.

It is not suprising that the noun "justice" appears nowhere in the platform draft. Though there are strong statements about the rights of minorities and a woman's right to choose, for the most part evasions and omissions are calculatingly chosen to deprive the presidential debate of important alternatives. This further feeds the public revulsion about "politics as usual." To add insult to abdication, the platform invokes Thomas Jeferson's revolutionary spirit. The memory of our Democratic Party's founder is thus used as a verbal fig leaf to cover the shame of his stunted political descendents.