

It's All Right Ma... I'm Only Bleeding!

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*Many thanks to **Bob Dylan**'s great song of the same name. What rankles me is how so many of my friends, neighbors and acquaintances seem to accept how far down the rabbit hole our Amerikan society has fallen. We live under the broken umbrella of an empire that cares not to protect the overwhelming majority of us. We live under the auspices of a regime that spends half of our hard earned tax dollars on phony wars, illegal foreign occupations and excessive militarism at home. Yet, most of the lemmings I cohabit with are only concerned about tripe news on sexual scandals and other base events that have nothing to do with their health or financial well being. For every person who can profit from this insane stock market run up, there are a thousand times more folks who are lucky to afford the bare necessities of life. Many of us, even we who earn more than the median income level, still walk around with missing teeth, knees and necks in need of operative repair and so on.*

We Amerikans have become like those serfs on the feudal manors, working hard and still bowing and scraping when the lord of the manor passes. Why should the boss worry in most businesses, when but less than 10% of private sector workers are in a union? There are fewer and fewer protections for working stiffs in Amerika, and the empire knows it. When we who know better shout as loud as we can that the Fat Cat CEOs earn upwards of 300 times that of their workers, some serfs answer "Well, they worked hard for their success, and they deserve it!" Really? Well, in 1960 the top federal tax rate was at 90%, and the Fat Cats still did very well (of course no one paid 90%- they all had accountants and plenty of write offs). In 1985 that top rate was at 50%... now it is at less than 39%, and sinking lower as I write. So, do the math: A Fat Cat CEO who earns 300 times of his or her worker is most likely keeping *double or triple* what his counterparts of 32 or 57 years ago kept. Where is the disgust from most of my fellow working stiffs?

To keep *one soldier* in Afghanistan costs the same as hiring 25 new fireman, policeman or school teachers, each at a \$ 40k a year salary. *Hellfire* Missiles (\$ 70,000 each) shot from a *Reaper Drone* (\$28 million dollars) many times not only kill innocents via *Collateral damage*, but that spending redirected can help keep our neighborhood libraries open longer and filled with *tons of new books!* The real crime is in the fact that our empire has NO business being in those countries... period! Monday, January 15th was Reverend King's birthday, and this coming April will be the 50th anniversary of his assassination, for that matter. A year before he was murdered, Reverend King gave one of his most memorable speeches, at the Riverside Church in N. Y . C. For the first time he publically denounced our empire's involvement in Indochina:

This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody

battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice and love.... A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Amerika is truly running out of band-aids!

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Philip A Farruggio is a son and grandson of Brooklyn , NYC longshoremen. He has been a free lance columnist since 2001, with over 300 of his work posted on sites like Consortium News, Information Clearing House, Global Research ,Nation of Change, World News Trust, Op Ed News, Dissident Voice, Counterpunch, Activist Post, Sleuth Journal, Truthout and many others. His blog can be read in full on World News Trust., whereupon he writes a great deal on the need to cut military spending drastically and send the savings back to save our cities. Philip has a internet interview show, ' It's the Empire... Stupid' with producer Chuck Gregory, and can be reached at paf1222@bellsouth.net

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