

The Fiction of Freedom in America: The “American Dream” of Social Inequality, Discrimination and Poverty

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“Just Another Word...For Nuthin’ Left to Lose”. (1)

“The American ruling class has gone further than any other in the world to suppress any public discussion of class. From the late 1940s on, the anti-communist witch-hunting associated with Senator Joseph McCarthy spearheaded a drive to effectively outlaw any public discussion of socialism, Marxism, or the class divisions in American society.” (2) “The American oligarchy spares no pains in promoting the belief that it does not exist, but the success of its disappearing act depends on equally strenuous efforts on the part of an American public anxious to believe in egalitarian fictions and unwilling to see what is hidden in plain sight.” (3)

America itself is a psy op, and the American Dream a “hollow-gram.” George Carlin said they call it the American Dream because you have to be asleep to believe it. Potemkin America creates a protective barrier, a moat between an “opulent minority” of castledwellers and the immiserated majority of consumer-serfs who live in the lower reaches of the economic village. The “opulent minority” purposefully perpetuates this situation as the means to ill-gotten gains, amassed by appropriating the “surplus” value produced by workers, whose labor creates the real wealth of society.

But there’s no way around the fact that whether on the backs of serfs, indentured servants, chattel slaves, wage slaves or debt slaves, there is no production without labor. “Labor is prior to, and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is superior to capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.” – Abraham Lincoln And labor has to eat, have shelter and medical care in order for that production to go on. The fight of the “opulent minority,” the possessors of capital – money, assets – is to keep these “costs” – food, shelter, medical care – to a bare minimum, and to get labor to pay for it whenever possible. This is class war, what it is, what it has been and what it will always be about – who gets what and how much.

The American people know that they do not have equal access to opportunity for justice, higher education, medical care, credit, food, energy, shelter, et al. They know that the weight of an individual vote counts for nothing when corporations vote with millions of dollars worth of Supreme Court-granted free “speech.” They know that they stand, noses pressed against the glass of the American Dream like poor children on Fifth Avenue at Christmas in the Thirties, looking in at “toys they would never have the chance to touch.” Real equality of opportunity requires that “everyone starts from the same point and

has equal prospects of progressing.” (4) But in America there is a class born on the five yard line of an economic touchdown which provides access not only to material wealth, but education, good jobs, shelter, food, healthcare and the political power to direct the course of the nation. And yet we accept this as equality of opportunity.

At the same time, the “opulent minority,” which comprises the bulk of corporate shareholders, find themselves in a dilemma. Their transnational corporations are reaching the outer limits of outsourcing, having brought the “benefits of freedom and democracy” via “free” market capitalism to nearly every corner of the earth. With such “humanitarian intervention” in “underdeveloped” “Third” World nations and the resulting growth of profits at their outer limits, the “opulent minority” of US corporate capitalists are looking back to America, licking their lips in anticipation over the fat middle class that grew up in the aftermath of the near-revolution during the First Great Depression.

This class is now ripe for plucking. The timid reforms of the New Deal created a false sense of security in a population fattened as financial fois gras/jerky in the event of a future economic Donner Party, where they starve us until we eat each other in order that they may continue to party like it’s 1899 at the Ritz. These predators mask their predation as “conservative principle” grounded in “natural laws” like supply and demand, the “free” market and survival of the fittest. But natural predators do not prey on members of their own species, nor do they kill prey in the prime of their lives – because it’s too dangerous. They take down the very old, the very young and the sick. (5) But our unnatural predator class is able to take us down in the prime of life because we’ve been domesticated, neutered of democracy and raised in corporate consumer-CAFOs and so go, if not willingly, willfully blind, into the economic abattoir of joblessness, foreclosure, homelessness, hunger and sickness.

But no. There are no classes in America. We’re all equal here. But since some of us are more equal than others, and there are some difficult choices to be made, some others of us will have to take one for the “team” while the gilded game goes on.

“The world’s wealthy, the luxury press is now reporting, have become ‘bored with frugality.’ They’re ‘splashing out on top brands’ again – and don’t particularly care how that splashing looks. Some deep pockets are rushing back to their favorite retail haunts. Tiffany has seen a ‘meaningful’ rebound in the sale of fine rocks that fetch at least \$50,000. Other swells are seeking new thrills. Aurumania, a design firm, is offering the ‘world’s most expensive bicycle,’ a gold-studded two-wheeler with a \$108,000 price tag. The firm has so far sold five. Another luxury designer, Stuart Hughes, has just begun marketing a diamond-laden high-def TV that retails at \$2.3 million.” (6)

“Gulfstream, the General Dynamics subsidiary that dominates the private jet world, is now taking orders for the hottest luxury jet ever, the \$64.5 million G650. This new fun flyer, due out in 2012, seats 18 and can fly nonstop from New York to Beijing at close to the speed of sound. But Gulfstream does have competitors. Boeing’s BBJ model starts at \$62 million. The extras that Boeing offers – like hot tubs and on-board fireplaces – can up that bill quickly...” (7)

“Hermes For Men on Manhattan’s Madison Avenue,” boasts a “\$178,000 white gold timepiece that sports a ‘tourbillion,’ an intricate mechanism supposed to counter the micro-second inaccuracies that gravity imposes...” (8) “Hermes (also) offers a variety of \$27,000-and-up luggage pieces, including a diamond-studded model that goes for \$200,000. Buyers

worried about airport wear-and-tear, the clerk explained, 'buy suitcases for their suitcases.'" (9) The jeweler Faberge' is "hawking brooches that run \$7 million each..." (10)

In 2007, Franck Muller, sold watches for \$736,000, Mont Blanc sold jewel-encrusted pens for \$700,000, and Louis Vuitton's most exclusive handbag went for \$42,000. In Manhattan and Los Angeles, restaurants and bars competed to outdo each other in excess. New York's Algonquin Hotel sold a \$10,000 "martini on a rock" - with a diamond at the bottom of the glass. And you could buy a burger for more than \$50, or an omelette for \$1,000. (11)

Back in 2006,"Microsoft's Paul Allen own(ed) a \$250-million, 414-foot 'gigayacht,' with seven decks, two helicopter landing pads, a swimming pool, a basketball court, an infirmary, a garage for Land Rovers, a movie theater, a concert space for 260 and a recording studio. Not to be outdone, Larry Ellison of software giant Oracle had his giant yacht built 452 feet long. Ellison's vessel has five stories, 82 rooms, 'a wine cellar the size of most beach bungalows, a dozen yacht tenders, and a generator capable of providing enough electricity for a small town in Idaho or Maine...Final cost: \$377 million.'" (12)

"In South Florida, the legions of designers and event planners who owe their livelihoods to the upper-crust are breathing a sigh of relief. The super rich are still spending...Bruce Sitka, a top exec with a West Palm Beach event-staging firm, said his company has one affair upcoming with a \$225,000 budget just for decorations...another South Florida event planner is now putting together a \$500,000 black-tie spring wedding. The 130-guest bash will feature \$110,000 worth of filet of beef and lobster tail and a 'canopy of 12-foot-tall birch trees draped with hanging orchids.'" (13)

And for a honeymoon? The Sandy Lane Hotel in Barbados offers rooms for up to \$15,000 a night. (14)

"In Southern California, the Los Angeles Times reports, the top luxury design showrooms are now lighting the way with 'light fixtures made from old French apple baskets' that 'carry \$1,600 price tags.' The fixtures go just perfectly with tables 'made from wine barrels and reclaimed stove tops' that start at \$1,240. The former curator of design at L.A.'s Museum of Contemporary Art is calling this hot new look 'dumpster diver deluxe.' What's the attraction of a \$3,000 sofa sectional 'upholstered in material from old pup tents?' The wealthy, says the National Design Museum's Matilda McQuaid, 'are trying to play the role of an 'impoverished man,' but in a very safe way.'" (15)

"Back in America's original Gilded Age a century ago, notes historian M.H. Dunlop, wealthy New Yorkers weary of 'seeing only persons like themselves who owned the same things they owned' went on midnight 'slumming tours' to sneak peeks at 'the unimaginably poor.' Some guidebooks even carried listings for these slumming excursions. Other wealthy New Yorkers took their cheap thrills in less formal outings. Some would drop by toy stores to watch poor kids gaze longingly through the windows at 'toys they would never have a chance to touch.'" (16)

While less than one percent of Americans can lie back, work at nothing and still afford "baubles" like these, they are also the most politically active - because they have the time to be. And for all intents and purposes, those of us who literally create the wealth of society with our labor every day, are passive political spectators - because we have no time left to participate. We agree to this when we get up, go to work and hand over most of the wealth we create to that one percent. And in order for the amount that one percent takes from us

to keep increasing, the amount of money allocated for our jobs, education, shelter, food and health must decrease, and it continues to do so – because the game is rigged.

In a casino, the odds are set slightly in favor of the house, a little over fifty percent. In the long run the house wins over half the time. By using corporations to accumulate and concentrate both material wealth and political power, the “opulent minority” can set the odds in their favor – much higher than just over fifty percent. They don’t win every time. They don’t have to. It’s actually in their favor not to, because that would destroy the illusion of freedom and democracy. They only need enough power to win often enough, generation after generation, via the set of loaded dice we call our economic system and the political system it controls, to appropriate the bulk of the nation’s wealth and power for themselves, forming the financial aristocracy Jefferson warned us about. (17)

Corporations are the most stunningly efficient mechanism for accumulating and concentrating wealth ever invented. This wealth is then translated into political power. Democracy disperses power. Corporations concentrate power. Corporations are property. Property as power, when accumulated in the hands of a few, inevitably becomes power over the majority.

The “opulent minority” of corporate shareholders/investors are modern capitalists, people for whom character amounts to an amount of money, and who serve absolutely no social function. Unlike their capitalist ancestors, they neither work for nor run the corporations they own. They hire managers/overseers to do their work for them. And the trump card these economic parasites hold is money. (18) And money, though the Supreme Court has equated it with free “speech,” has no ideas or ideals. It has no hope for the future – except more of itself. And as it’s siphoned away from its creators, the working majority of the American people, it’s necessary to convince them that their financial condition is a direct result of their own actions, not those of corporations, so they will accept that they are the cause of corporations’ effects.

And when their Wall Street slights-of-hand result in world-wide recessions, the “opulent minority” still insist on large, stable profits, so they take their money-ball back out of the stock market game and stamp their feet until wages drop drastically. Only then will they allow jobs to reappear, albeit at much lower wages. So what it finally comes down to is nothing happens unless the rich allow it to happen. And they commit this social extortion in plain sight. (19)

They resent, rather than respect, those who make their lifestyle possible, and look down on them with thinly veiled contempt. They feel entitled to take the entire American Pie, but feel nothing for their victims. Like heirs who cannot wait for the death of their benefactor, they plan to kill us to get the money now, even if it means killing the goose who lays the golden egg of over 70% of US GDP via consumption by credit. In fact the largest part of the US economy’s assets is the income streams that come from such debt. And like Matt Taibbi’s “vampire squid,” the “opulent minority” have tapped their blood funnels directly into them.

Capitalism has always been the carrier of its own, and our, destruction. In capitalists’ efforts to bring production costs to zero, they are attempting to leave consumer-debt slaves with next to nothing. But until every shred of “privilege” above and beyond those of people living worldwide on under \$2.00 a day is taken from the cattle-chattel, they will continue to

munch the cud of useless consumer fluff, secure in an atrazine, fluoride, mercury, arsenic, MSG, pesticide, hormone, antibiotic and high fructose corn syrup-induced coma. It is when the pain becomes too personal, when insufficient food, shelter and medical care forces them cold, sick and hungry, into tent cities under freeways and into large drainage pipes for shelter, that capitalism's final solution becomes sickeningly crystal clear. "The illusion of freedom and democracy will continue as long as it's profitable to continue. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, pull back the curtains, and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theater." - Frank Zappa

The cattle-chattel will realize that as well as having nothing, they have nothing to lose, that is, nothing material left to lose. They will have only time, which will weigh on them. And since each American is a rugged individualist who needs "nothing from no one" and stoically bears all the responsibility for his financial condition, Americans will continue to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, even after wearing out their last pair of boots working for the corporations, and do the same macabre marathon "dance of self-reliance" prescribed as medicine for the First Great Depression. (20)

Even though each of us produces, say, \$85.00 worth of product/wealth per hour for which we get paid \$14.00 per hour, the corporation takes \$71.00 per hour - five times what the person who created the wealth gets. That's \$71.00 for each worker. One hundred workers equals \$7,100. Eight hours of this equals \$56,800. Five days a week yields \$284,000. In one month, \$1,136,000. In one year, \$13,632,000. But what about the cost of all the machinery, the factory itself and raw materials? The factory and the machinery were paid for a long time ago - and not replaced. Even if the corporation had deigned to buy new ones, they can write it off as it depreciates in value every year - 'til it's worthless. And then keep using it. Didn't you notice the parts falling off the machines and the rain coming through the roof? And as for the cost of raw materials - this includes human "resources" - corporations can write it all off their taxes as the cost of doing business, while you may not write off the cost of staying alive. In 2009, Exxon (21) and General Electric (22) paid no US taxes. In fact, "JP Morgan Chase, which made \$12 billion in profit in 2009 is on the verge of getting \$1.4 billion in tax returns." (23)

But most of us make our own way on that \$14.00 per hour - or less - without the business-friendly crutches that every "self-made" multimillionaire claims he didn't use to make himself rich beyond our wildest dreams - subsidies, tax abatements, offshore accounts, capital gains, a work force of millions to do his work for him, et al. And as for billionaires like Bill "50 billion" Gates, Warren "40 billion" Buffet, Christy "21.5 billion" Walton, Jim C. "19.6 billion" Walton, Alice "19.3 billion" Walton, S. Robson "19 billion" Walton, Michael "17.5 billion" Bloomberg, Charles "16 billion" Koch, David "16 billion" Koch and George "13 billion" Soros (24), well, if you made \$50,000 a year and you worked for 20,000 - that's twenty thousand - years, you, too, could make one billion dollars. And those who do possess such vast wealth did not get it by doing anything like working. They got it by owning things or buying them, with no thought of the economic and life-altering cost to their victims.

And "By and large, the fabulously wealthy have derived their fortunes from inheritance, the stock market, the real estate bubble, fortunate investments in technology or, perhaps, American militarism, in short, from semi-automatic economic and social processes associated with the lowering of living standards for millions in the US and the super-exploitation of masses of people in impoverished countries in other parts of the

world. Today, the list of the super-rich reveals an extraordinary growth of parasitism. One indication is Forbes' listing of the '400,' which includes an extraordinary number of people whose wealth, according to the publication, is derived from "Investments," Hedge Funds," "Leveraged Buyouts," "Real Estate," etc. (25) (italics in original)

"I realized that my moral scruples would make no difference to the real world, given the conditions of effective or near-perfect competition that prevail in financial markets, if I abstained somebody else would take my place. In deciding which stocks or currencies to buy or sell, I was guided by only one consideration: to maximize my profits by weighing the risks against the rewards. My decisions related to events that had social consequences. When I bought shares in Lockheed and Northrop after managements were indicted for bribery I helped sustain the price of the stock. When I sold sterling short in 1992, the Bank of England was on the other side of my transactions and I was taking money out of the pockets of British taxpayers. But if I had tried to take the social consequences into account, it would have thrown off my risk/reward calculations and my chances of being successful would have been reduced. Fortunately I did not need to bother about the social consequences because they would have occurred anyway: Financial markets have a sufficiently large number of participants so that no single participant can have an appreciable effect on the outcome. Bringing my social conscience into the decision-making process would not make any difference in the real world. Britain would have devalued anyway. If I were not single-minded in pursuit of profit, it would affect only my own results...I blessed the luck that led me to the financial markets and allowed me not to dirty my hands. The fact remains that anonymous market participants are largely exempt from moral choices as long as they play by the rules." - George Soros

While no single snowflake is responsible for an avalanche, and no single drop of water for a flood, millions and billions of them - like Soros' millions and billions of dollars worth of stock shares - do create devastation. "Philosophy should always know that indifference is a militant thing. It batters down the walls of cities and murders the women and children amid the flames and the purloining of altar vessels. When it goes away it leaves smoking ruins, where lie citizens bayoneted through the throat. It is not a children's pastime like mere highway robbery." - Stephen Crane

The fact that if you didn't beat an old woman to death in an alley because she didn't have enough money on her to bother stealing someone else would have is not justification. To take advantage when you already have it is execrable. But it is for this reason that you see "LLC" after a corporation's name. It means "limited liability corporation," in other words, the owners/shareholders are not responsible for the actions the corporation takes on their behalf.

And the "opulent minority" would have us believe that our financial condition is not the fault of regulatory agencies who looked the other way, or bankers who made loans to people they knew couldn't repay them while laughingly calling them "liar loans." And that it certainly isn't because the Reagan/Bush/Clinton/Bush administrations deregulated everything in sight, busted unions and sent American industry in search of the world's most desperate people so the "opulent minority" could live off their backs while they ate dirt "cookies" in Haiti. And that it has nothing to do with credit card corporations that pushed charge cards as the only way people could sustain the "American Way of Life" after the wage per hour in America stopped rising in the 1970s. But somebody made the economic policy decisions that put food, shelter and healthcare out of our reach.

The explosion of the wealth gap comes as a direct result of choices made to redistribute wealth from those who actually create it by producing products or delivering services, to investors whose major contribution to society is moving money around from your pocket to their pockets. The servants of these investors and money “managers,” like corporate executives and our elected – excuse the expression -representatives, look from the side, taking a payoff, as we get economically raped.

This is designed to prevent wage “inflation” (that’s a raise in the minimum, or any other, wage) by keeping unemployment high, so the demand for labor is low. Impoverishing the people in the country next door by destroying their economy with NAFTA so they flood here willing to take any job at all, importing highly-skilled labor from overseas at a much lower rate on H51 visas because we don’t, for instance, have enough engineers and scientists (look for them on the unemployment line), and outsourcing what few US jobs remain to the desperately poor people in “developing” countries all serve to create a great global glut of labor reduced to taking whatever they’re grudgingly offered by their corporate masters. By paying less for labor, the “opulent minority” can take more of the wealth that labor creates as profit. And by creating recessions, they can discipline labor via humiliation.

Alan Greenspan, former Federal Reserve Chairman, believes consumer debt is “a very potent and very desirable financial institution” (July 25, 2005) and that pay raises are inflationary. He has famously bragged that what had caused quiescence among labor union members when it comes to striking for higher wages or even for better working conditions is the fear of being fired and being unable to meet their mortgage and credit card payments. One paycheck away from homelessness, or a down-graded credit rating leading to soaring interest charges has become a formula for labor management.” (26)

And when wages don’t rise along with profits, the Dow Jones skyrockets and investors get wealthier faster. It also makes the economy, on average, look as if it’s “recovering.” You and I make \$300.00 a week. Bill Gates makes a million or more a week (probably more). You do the math. No. I will. Your, my and Bill’s wages average out to \$333,533 a week. There. Now don’t you feel better? The economy’s recovering nicely, thank you.

The dream of the “opulent minority” has always been to get even more money without working at all, and without giving anything in return for it, to not have to pay working people to make things and then wait to get the money back when other working people buy them. If they could just...get the money without the middleman, e.g. the workers. But then who would make the stuff and buy it so that they could get the money? Hmmmmmmm.....

Somebody has to make real wealth, as opposed to shuffling around pieces of “IOU-paper” which masquerades as real wealth, which is tangible, which you can touch. It’s not a representation of anything. It’s reality. It’s your house, your car, your farm, your small business... And the way the “opulent minority” can get all that real wealth is to extend debt, excuse me, credit, to the people who make the real wealth, so they can live off the interest until the people can’t pay it anymore. Then they can buy up that real wealth for pennies on the dollar, just like they did in the First Great Depression.

But that’s still not enough. Even though they’ve got most all the stuff, they still itch for more. Even though they’ve got our homes, our cars, our farms and businesses, our kids chained like indentured servants to college loans for the rest of their lives or off fighting to make the world safe for their transnational corporations to plunder the resources of the sovereign nations in the “Third” World, it’s still not enough. It will never be enough.

And to keep us on the treadmill, and the threat of democracy at bay, they instituted the “Gospel of Consumption.” No matter how much we have they can make us believe it’s not enough, because “Nothing breeds radicalism more than unhappiness unless it is leisure.” – John E. Edgerton, president of the National Association of Manufacturers And that was exactly what they were afraid of when they fought against an eight-hour day, a five-day week, the abolition of child labor, a minimum wage and universal suffrage.

“Our enormously productive economy...demands that we make consumption a way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction in consumption... We need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate.” – Victor Lebeau, 1947

“By advertising and other promotional devices...a measurable pull on production has been created which releases capital otherwise tied up (e.g. our money). Economically we have a boundless field before us; that there are new wants which will make way endlessly for newer wants, as fast as they are satisfied.” – Herbert Hoover’s 1929 Committee on Recent Economic Changes (emphasis added)

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of the country.” – Edward Bernays, 1928

The “opulent minority” believe that the poor have always wanted to plunder the rich, perhaps because that is what the rich have been doing to the poor for thousands of years. The “opulent minority” are afraid of people who have “too much” time on their hands and too little fear of losing what little they’ve got. In order to keep us from engaging in social or workplace protest, they inject us with the fear of a faceless, amorphous terrorist boogeyman, and in fact, with the fear of fear itself via their monopoly on media.

The “opulent minority” requires a large and fearful class of unthinking, working poor that can be easily distracted and manipulated, who don’t have the time to be politically active, who will remain in denial that they are being economically devoured and thus not consciously deal with questions such as who produces? who profits? who works? who benefits? who uses? who gets used? who is whose bitch?

“Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth – more than ruin – more even than death... Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habit. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.” – Bertrand Russell

By freeing us from our relationship with stuff, by impoverishing us and restoring to us the time it takes to make the transactions to get stuff, the “opulent minority” will plunge us, cold turkey, into withdrawal from the drug of consumerism which keeps away all those nasty thoughts about democracy – credit cards, SUVs, plasma TVs, cigarettes and alcohol, romance novels, talk radio, soap operas, gossip/news, sports, shopping and Tea Partying. They prefer we spend our time away from work in pursuit of consumer goods in a cruel and discounted, Chinese-manufactured parody of their own conspicuous consumption.

But if we don't write our own story, our history, the "opulent minority" will write it for us. When we delegate our responsibility for being participating members of a democracy to representatives, we put the pen into someone else's hand. When we further fail to "edit" the story our representatives are writing, we allow the "opulent minority" to step in and pay those representatives to write the story in their favor, no matter what the rest of us might want or need.

We exchange our labor for the narcotic trinkets of consumer culture, and with our noses to the Grindstone of More, ignore the fact that we do not own what we have paid for. You do not "own" a home if you are paying a mortgage. The bank owns it - for about 30 years - which has become disgustingly apparent in the current wave of foreclosures. You do not even "own" your education, when its fruits are consumed by payments on a student loan. Nor do you own your car, anything you've purchased with a credit card or, increasingly, even your health.

And as we continue to knuckle under, allow unions (our only means of bargaining collectively with the massive collectives known as corporations) to be decimated, accept more and more work done by fewer and fewer workers for less and less compensation, our submission snowballs into an avalanche of subsistence as our "representatives" continue to write the political story of who gets what and how much, of corporate supremacy and a financial aristocracy that is killing the American experiment in democracy.

The "opulent minority" of corporate shareholders has an undemocratic, iron stranglehold on America's throat. To make any social progress, this grip has to be broken, and that will require a social revolution. And for that to happen we've got to stop fixating on "How did this happen to me?" It happened to a whole lot of "me's." And while the "opulent minority" is getting what they asked for - all the stuff - by relieving us of our stuff, they're counting on each of us thinking we're in this alone. But the people we stepped all over on our way "up" to the American Dream are all around us, down here on the "opulent minority's" killing floor.

It is all these "me's" whom the "opulent minority" hopes will not get together as we, we the people with time on our hands. This is their nightmare and they've brought it on themselves by taking every last thing we had. It was never enough for them. They were even out foreclosing on churches on Christmas Eve. (27)

"You can only have power over people so long as you don't take everything away from them. But when you've robbed a man of everything he's no longer in your power - he's free again." - Aleksander Solzhenitsyn

America admits to 10% unemployment. That means the real number is probably 17-20%, because if you stop looking for work they stop counting you. If you can get 12 hours of work a week, well you are employed. If you apply for welfare, excuse me, workfare, they will find 40 hours a week of something for you to do, but this administration will not find you a job. At the height of the Great Depression, unemployment was 25%.

Since December of 2007, Fed Chair Ben Bernanke says the private sector lost eight million jobs. In 2008, the US Census showed 47.4 million of us were living below the "official" poverty line. Twenty million of us collected unemployment in 2009.

There were 2.8 million foreclosures in 2009 - almost 8,000 every day (28), and Diana Olick of CNBC's Realty Check says there are currently 7.9 million more homeowners behind on

their mortgage payments. In the first nine months of 2009 alone, 1.4 million of us applied for personal bankruptcy. And a study by Harvard Medical School found that over 60% of these bankruptcies were caused by healthcare expenses.

On December 11, 2009, the USDA reported that a record 37.2 million of us were eating courtesy of food stamps. And on January 13, 2010, the New York Times reported that six million of us were living with no income at all other than \$100 to \$200 a month in food stamps.

That's over a hundred million "me's." That's what worries the "opulent minority," Hamilton's "disease of democracy," rule by "the mob," "the great beast," the "common" people. Democracy cannot co-exist with rule by the few, the rich. Rule by the rich is plutocracy. So you can see the "opulent minority's" problem. It's you and you and you and you and you and you and me. It's us. It's we the people of the United States, and we are not powerless when we work together, only when we let them isolate us from each other and allow them to use their money power to keep us apart and at their mercy. They get to work together (against us) in their own interest in the form of their property, the corporation, but we may not work together to bargain in our interest in...unions.

Labor unions are "one of the few mechanisms by which ordinary people can get together and compensate for the concentration of capital and power. That's why the United States has a very violent labor history, a repeated effort to destroy unions anytime they make any progress." - Noam Chomsky

To that end the "opulent minority" used the Supreme Court as their scalpel, to transplant the constitutional rights belonging to human beings into their property, the corporation. By taking for their property the rights and protections of human beings, by stripping human beings of their rights, and by making the vote invisible on their privately-owned machines which may not be examined by the people, they intend to win the class war in a bloodless coup.

Always remember, there are only two kinds of people, those who work and those who don't. And, yes, you may be a man or a woman. You may be white, black, red, yellow or brown. You may be gay or straight. You might be a student or a retiree, a high school grad, a college grad or a dropout. An evangelical or an atheist. But when one of these groups fights for its rights, perhaps not in opposition to others, but to their exclusion, we are effectively doing the "opulent minority's" work for them. We are dividing and conquering ourselves. Read that again. We are dividing and conquering ourselves. And that is how capitalism is perpetuated.

Get this straight. An injury to one is an injury to all. If they can do it to "them," to "those people," they can do it to us, to you. If they do it to brown people, they'll do it to white people. If they can deny it to a gay person, they'll deny it to a straight person. If they can get one group, or a gaggle of groups, all working in their own interests, they can take us on one group at a time while they all work together, collectively incorporated, and scatter us like dust under their feet as we work against each other, and against our own interests, to their interest, for them, and distracted from them, a buffer between sides in the Class War.

But they only call it class war when we fight back. Let's fight back. Together. Because "We must all hang together or...we will surely all hang separately. - Benjamin Franklin

“Freedom is participation in power.” – Marcus Tullius Cicero

Kill capitalism before it kills you.

Notes

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(5) Paul Colinvaux, “Why Big Fierce Animals Are Scarce,” Princeton University Press, pp. 150-161, 1978.

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(7) Too Much, 4/12/10

(8) Too Much, 3/15/10

(9) Too Much, 2/8/10

(10) Too Much, 9/21/09

(11) Paul Harris, “Is the US Heading for ‘Developing Nations’ Inequality Levels?,” The Smirking Chimp, 7/31/07

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(15) Too Much, 6/15/09

(16) Too Much, 9/15/08

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(21) Adam Weinstein, Exxon’s Income Tax: \$0 (UPDATED)”, Mother Jones, 4/5/10

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(28) Realty Trac

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