

When Will American Labor ‘Connect the Dots’?

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A few years ago in Wisconsin and in two major cities in California, voters (made up mostly of working folks) chose to restrict the benefit packages and wage increases for public service AKA government employees. Some say that since most of the workers in these places, and throughout America, are employed by the private sector, the attitude became one of resentment. The private sector and non union (in most cases) workers were fed up of seeing their public sector counterparts getting better benefit packages and wage increases. I call it Innerclass warfare. Sad, isn't it, when the less than 1% of our nation can create such divisions within the labor force. Yet, that was only part of the problem that this voting revealed. In Wisconsin the voters chose to side with a right wing governor who was candid about his goal to eliminate collective bargaining within the public service sector. This device cuts the legs off of the union movement... first with government workers and then copied by the private sector .

Why has all this been happening? Well, the answer is so obvious, yet our mainstream media and even many union leaders refuse to recognize it. Former president Eisenhower labeled it the *Military Industrial Complex*, and it has all but *bankrupted* our economy. Within 13 years our military spending has just about *doubled!* In 2011, under Mr. *Hope and Change*, taxpayers were charged *56 cents* of every dollar we sent to Uncle Sam for military spending. Never before in the *history* of our nation has it ever approached such an amount. We have close to one thousand permanent military bases in over *80 different* countries. We illegally invaded and occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, to the tune of over *100 billion tax dollars* a year. It costs us 1.2 million dollars to keep *one soldier* in Afghanistan for a year. That would pay the salaries of 30 teachers, police officers or firemen at \$ 40k a year each. Where is the outrage?

Historically, our Congress was able to send money to the states for their budgets and their cities' budget problems. This was called *Revenue Sharing*. The money was sent to the states in the form of *block grants*, meaning it did not have to be paid back. Pretty good, right? Well, that all ended with our devotion to invading countries and occupying them. That all ended with the fear button being pushed down the throats of the public... as we now have with this ISIL, who, by the way, are made up of many who were left homeless or devastated by the Bush gang's illegal and shameful attacks on their native lands. Both the Republican and the Democratic parties have enabled the Pentagon and the *Military Industrial Complex* to get more and more of our hard earned tax dollars. Under the Democrat President Obama military spending soared to over *600 billion dollars*, and that did not include what many site as the *black budget*, or money funneled into military programs which have no congressional oversight. It does not matter who occupies the White House, they all dance to the Pentagon piper. The Congress and the Presidency has for the most part been owned not only by Wall Street, but by this War Empire. The phony demagogue who

promised to 'Drain the swamp' is filling it with more money for the military... as our cities and towns go down the rabbit hole!

If only the hard working American labor force would take a moment to ponder. If the CEOs of our Fortune 100 companies are earning in excess of *400 times* that of their lowest paid full time employee... shouldn't we have a society whereupon ALL working stiffs have good benefit packages and wage increases? Let's extend that conversation and say that shouldn't ALL Americans have the same medical and dental coverage that those CEOs have? I could go on and on but let us leave it at that. If you work for a living ANYWHERE you should be allied with ALL your fellow working stiffs for fair wages and benefits. Isn't it time for what the Wobblies envisioned over 100 years ago: *One big union?* The bottom line is this: *If we cut the military spending by 25% and sent the savings back to the states etc, there would be NO budget crisis in any state or city!!! Period!!* And for all my right wing neighbors who bitch and moan about high property taxes, well, if more *Revenue Sharing* came back to our cities perhaps then the property taxes needn't be so high. Stop supporting political parties and candidates who oppose such an idea.

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