

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



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TO WHAT PURPOSE?

It has been said the purpose of life is to survive and to procreate. While that makes sense, it leaves an unanswered question: what does survival mean? Procreation seems to survive under sometimes appalling adversity and will continue barring total destruction of life on earth.

The meaning of survival has been, since before history, a search for a richer life. From hunter gatherers, to primitive society, to feudal society and on to capitalism, society has constantly striven to make survival more certain and richer.

The enemy of survival and a richer life is poverty. While survival and procreation have continued in spite of historically high levels of poverty, richness of life has obviously suffered. The struggle against poverty has been a central feature of progress toward a richer life. The clarion call of capitalist development has been its greater productivity as a reducer of poverty. Its economic and ideological strength is and has been its increasing productivity - it "roads paved in gold." In that aspect it has received the conscious and unconscious support of the peoples of the world.

That support is now diminishing. For the second time in U.S. history the nation is divided on a fundamental issue -support for the war in Iraq.

The first such division, after the Revolution, as we know, was the Civil War. It was fundamental a struggle to free capitalist productivity from the fetters of plantation slavery. It was seen as a war for progress to a richer life. The Iraq war is seen as a threat to a richer life in its antidemocratic, imperialist, debt-ridden Iraq war for oil and world domination; plus its deception, and the threat of federal financial bankruptcy. The fundamental risk felt by those opposing the Iraq war is the fear that capitalism's historic liberation of productive forces is subject to betrayal. The Bush program is seen as abandonment of the "business of America is business", as Calvin Coolidge said in the 20s. Even supporters of Bush may well be falsely seeking to keep business uppermost, thinking that support of war is still support as of old for "business." As a nation we are now facing unprecedented challenges to economic and political progress toward a richer life.

This is a crisis brought about by the inevitable evolution of capitalism to increasing concentration of power and wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Few doubt the hold of corporate power and money on politics. Instinctively at least one half, as on Iraq, of Americans feel this is leading us to diminishing national power, health, wealth and productivity.

THE SLEEPING DRAGON

Napoleon once called China a sleeping dragon better left that way. He also said anyone who advocated going to war with China should have their head examined - or words to that effect.

Today, as we know China is awakened. To put it in simple terms, China's immense power, military, industrial and possibly political, makes it potentially a new super power, number two at present but destined to rival U.S. for numero uno; providing we don't blow everything to smithereens beforehand.

Heretofore U.S. and other geopolitical strategists held that China could not succeed under Communist rule, Communism being unworkable. They may have been right considering the fate of Soviet communism. But Chinese Communism took a detour after the debacle of the Cultural Revolution. It apparently decided under the principle of yin-yang, which requires opposites to be synthesized, to bring socialism and capitalism together. This is somewhat in line with the Marxist principle of dialectical materialism which holds that opposite forces will resolve into a higher synthesis through struggle. The result has been labeled by the Chinese as socialism with a Chinese character. Communists generally call it State Capitalism. Just where it will end up remains to be seen. But in the meantime China is all gung ho for development. The rest of the world may now see China as a rival for markets, especially U.S. markets. China recently set up a trade pact with the 10 nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This constitutes a challenge to U.S. influence in Asia. It is the same type of free trade agreement U.S. has with Latin America, the North American Free Trade Agreement -(NAFTA). The Chinese predict it will encompass \$130 billion to \$140 billion by 2010. Present U.S.- ASEAN trade is about \$120 billion per year.

What this may mean to Pacific Rim trade is something to watch. Longshore jobs enter the picture with China likely exporting to those countries we now cover, and they exporting to a growing, gigantic Chinese market instead of to the U.S. market. Longshore jobs could lose out. As Myron Brilliant, senior vice president of Asia policy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said, "This is a wake-up call."

THE TWELVE TRILLION DOLLAR PROBLEM

The last session of Congress raised the federal debt limit to over eight trillion dollars. On December 9, Thomas Friedman, columnist in the Seattle Sunday Times said that the Bush tax cut & spend program will add five trillion dollars more.

The Seattle Times of December 4 reports that "U.S. job growth slowed sharply last month, and many workers incomes fell as automakers, airlines and retailers trimmed their payrolls just as the holiday season was beginning, the Labor Department reported yesterday." And that manufacturing continued to shed jobs for a third consecutive month, with payrolls shrinking by 5,000. The nation's factories, in a long slump are struggling in the face of competition from lower-wage countries such as China."

Unfortunately, there is more bad news. In a column by Kenneth H. Torp, Seattle consultant in international public finance writes.

"The United States is now consuming three-quarters of the entire world's surplus savings. If the bush plan for privatizing Social Security becomes a reality, the transition cost will require either spending cuts (highly unlikely) or additional borrowing (highly unlikely) of between \$2 trillion and \$3,6 trillion over the next ten years, One immediate result of all this red ink is that the dollar has lost half its value relative to the euro since 2000 and some economists expect it to decline another 20 percent to 40 percent, Former Fed Chairman Paul Volker recently stated there was a 75 percent chance of a currency crisis in the United States in the next five years, "The United States may be the "exception" but ---- *Continued on page 3*



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The Twelve Trillion Dollar Problem *From page 2*
international bankers are unimpressed, when you owe as much as we do to foreign creditors, sooner or later they will call the tune and we will be obliged to dance. Our foreign creditors don't even have to call their loans to bring on the ultimate day of financial reckoning. All it takes is a sharp decline in their willingness to further finance further fiscal profligacy. Interest rates will be forced up, bond prices will nosedive, and interest-rate sensitive industries will feel the pinch, especially real estate that is probably overpriced anyway. A rapid contraction of U.S. economic activity is far from unthinkable, and with it a worldwide reduction in trade, (and longshore jobs) investment and economic growth. ...But in the long run, the wisdom of mortgaging a substantial share of our sovereignty to foreign creditors" (as in third world countries) may constitute one of the largest blunders of U.S. history. "The staggering irony here is that the most bellicose administration in recent history on issues of international cooperation is likely to bring about the sharpest curtailment of foreign policy sovereignty by handing veto power to the very same international players it so recently snubs.

It is hard to believe the Bush administration is so completely ignorant or maybe not so hard that it is not aware of Mr. Torp's warning, if Bush is unaware, then we have to get rid of his administration by election or impeachment or see the coming of financial as well as political disaster. The charges of financial incompetence plus corruption in Iraq and Middle East warfare ought to be sufficient grounds.

Watch for the limit of financial support from the international bankers. The limit is \$12 trillion. We now stand at \$8 trillion plus. The above reports show we are likely to hit the limit of international financial support between those two figures. Watch for the hitting of the fan on its way to you.

The other possibility in the Bush financial program may be quite a deliberate policy to bring on dictatorship. There may be a method in his madness." He could be basing hopes of gaining some form of dictatorship by deliberately fostering chaos. Financial ruin gave Hitler his opportunity to take over by telling the German people he could solve their problems if given dictatorial power. His solution didn't work. But the German people paid a horrible price.

Most of us thought the threat of dictatorship was forever removed in the Second World War against fascism. We forgot that corporate power seeks to preserve and enlarge itself at any and all costs, including dictatorship. If we want to avoid dictatorship, which most people do, we have to curb corporate power. We can promote that program by telling our neighbors, friends, relatives, fellow workers and others what is needed. Spread the word.

HUMVEE ARMOR

By the time you read this about the lack of humvee armor for troops in Iraq, it may be old news. But Rumsfeld's neglect of troop protection is not old. it is just another example of Pentagon and ideologue sacrifice of U.S. troops and Iraqis in a war that is illegal and a crime against U.S. troops and humanity. Rumsfeld and his neocon war mongers see no sacrifice of life they can resist. Like Oscar Wilde who said he could resist anything but temptation, they cannot resist any temptation to waste resources or U.S. and Iraqi lives to gain a criminal military objective.

One letter writer to the daily press answered Rumsfeld's retort to the U.S. soldier who asked him why our troops had to scavenge steel plate in Iraq to weld onto their humvees for protection, replied to the effect that soldiers cannot choose the army they get. He replied that neither can they get the kind of leadership of the armed forces they should get. Rumsfeld was left hanging in the wind. He should be left hanging outside the Pentagon. If he and his gang of war mongers were left out, we might be able to get out of the Iraqi mess and allow them to choose their own government.

Remember, Iraq posed no military threat to the U.S., was not allied to Osama bin Laden and had no WMD's. Yet the war is continued, like in Vietnam, at the cost of thousands of lives, both of our soldiers and Iraqis.

When will we ever learn to take control of our own government and root out the warriors and their nation wrecking gang of criminals?



WELCOME COMEBACK OF PIER 25

The Seattle Post Intelligencer of 12/16/04 reports that due to overflow of cargo in Southern California ports, the old pier 25 will be reopened to container operations in July. This will add to the 17 percent growth in the Port of Seattle through November. There will be 284 permanent jobs plus 346 temporary construction jobs. It will add \$14 million in yearly wages and salaries, according to Mike Shultz, port spokesperson.

"John Littel, Assistant executive for the Seattle Building Trades Council ... said 'we are supportive of the port of the Seattle's relationship with shippers and keeping container shipping as a primary focus' he said. The working waterfront is what Seattle is about."

This should remind those who want to put condominiums in place of pier46 that their schemes to steal the waterfront goes against the welfare of a Seattle major industry and the Port of Seattle's vital and growing future.

FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Federated Auxiliaries Executive Board meeting was held October 16 and 17, 2004 at the Best Western Executive Inn, Seattle, Washington.

Auxiliaries attending were from Washington, California, Oregon and Canada.

The keynote speaker was William E. Adams, Secretary/Treasurer, of the I.L.W.U. International office in San Francisco, California.

TO WHAT PURPOSE?

From page 1

Hardly anyone outside the Bush gang predicts a prosperous future. Continued outsourcing of jobs, lowering wages, more poverty, increasing gaps of wealth and income between rich and poor, and slowly diminishing economic productivity - attested by many even formal economists - leads to financial and political crisis.

Unless something is done to turn this decline into its opposite, we face a dismal future. It is time for radical change on the order of the New Deal of Great Depression time - and a whole lot more. We are slipping into the well known hole full of the unspeakable.

We must liberate productivity and the richness of life.

SEEDS OF HOPE

From "the Nation"

At the close of 2004, progressives can be forgiven for feeling they've found themselves in a particularly bleak midwinter. When they gather on New Year's Eve, the term "good riddance" will doubtless accompany reflections on a year that saw America re-elect a President who gave us the Iraq quagmire, record trade and budget deficits and the steady erosion of our civil liberties. But even an annus horribilis can produce enough progress to inspire hope for better days.

Election day brought down-ticket signals that a more populist politics may be in the offing. In Vermont, the state's Progressive Party won six legislative seats. San Francisco elected an activist Green, Ross Mirkarimi, to its board of supervisors and affirmed the commitment of the city that challenged the Bush Administration's anti-gay marriage crusade to maintain its radical opposition to the politics of fear. Across the country, seventeen graduates of Camp Wellstone, inspired by Paul and Sheila Wellstone's ideals, won races for the state legislature, school board and city council, while Cincinnati voters overturned a charter amendment that prohibited city officials from passing any laws aimed at protecting gays and lesbians.

In New York David Soares, a young activist attorney who ran against the draconian Rockefeller drug laws on the Democratic and Working Families Party lines, was elected Albany County District Attorney. The Los Angeles City Council unanimously adopted the nation's most aggressive antisweatshop ordinance after two years of lobbying by local unions, sweatshop workers, clergy and activists, and Florida and Nevada voters overwhelmingly passed initiatives to raise the minimum wage.

Western states saw a Democratic surge, as the party gained control of previously Republican legislative chambers and statewide seats; gains included a new US Senator, Ken Salazar, in Colorado. Salazar, a Latino, will join Illinois's Barack Obama, who will be the only African-American in the Senate after an absence of blacks for six years.

The two will enter a Congress where challenging Bush will be hard but not impossible. Patriot Act II legislation stalled in the House, as the courts began to challenge the Administration's suspension of due process for Guantánamo detainees.

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THE GOP's SABOTAGE OF SOCIAL SECURITY

by Robert Scheer

Just my luck: I finally get to be a senior citizen only to discover that the President considers my longevity a grave threat to the nation. Apparently, my collecting Social Security checks for as long as I have left on this Earth is going to help bankrupt the economy and/or be an unbearable burden on young Americans.

That's why, after seven decades of unmitigated success in protecting seniors from the vagaries of market forces, the White House now wants to turn Social Security itself over to the vagaries of market forces. The conservative mantra, whether it comes to energy policy, war in Iraq or education, is to siphon public money into the private sector whenever and wherever possible, through such gimmicks as agribusiness subsidies, school vouchers and the hiring of private mercenaries.

Greed perfectly meshes with ideology in the Republican Party, and the attempted sabotage of Social Security is just another example. While the followers of Milton Friedman talk about the free market in religious terms, Wall Street is slaving at the possibility of one of the biggest potential windfalls in human history if the Social Security spigot is turned its way. The attendant investment fees alone would be enormous--certainly higher than the minimal 1 percent overhead costs the current Social Security system consumes.

What's astonishing is that despite the recent spate of abrupt corporate bankruptcies and Wall Street corruption scandals, the President would have us believe only stockbrokers can save Social Security, and the stability of the entire fund would be tied to a stock market that has been known to tank now and again. Further, even the President's key advisors admit that the short-run cost of "privatizing" Social Security would add trillions of dollars to the Bush legacy of federal government red ink.

While I am all for expanding opportunities to invest in tax- deferred retirement accounts (like 401k's), it does not follow that Social Security should be exposed to the same risks. Social Security is the safety net for the elderly that has since its inception protected millions from facing abject poverty upon retirement--even if their pensions should evaporate, as they did for the employees of Enron.

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SEEDS OF HOPE

From page 4

Farm groups and organic-food activists prevented the food-processing industry from derailing country-of-origin labeling regulations--a major victory over special interests. In early December Louisiana voters elected Democrat Charlie Melancon, who campaigned against the Central America Free Trade Agreement, which will face a fight in the next Congress. Such fights could be made harder for the Administration if its main muscle on Capitol Hill--House majority leader Tom DeLay of Texas--is out of commission; DeLay is battling to keep ahead of investigators and indictments.

Major media began to show signs in the course of the year of recognizing that they had been gamed by the Bush Administration, with the New York Times, the Washington Post and CBS's 60 Minutes apologizing in their own way for their failures of skepticism before the invasion of Iraq. That is thanks in no small part to criticism by media watchdog groups and to truth-telling by documentary filmmakers like Michael Moore and Robert Greenwald. Also during 2004 progressives created Air America, part of an alternative to the right-wing echo chamber.

In the waning days of 2004, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld--whose ouster we urged eighteen months ago--finally appeared to be losing his aura of arrogant invincibility, as a majority of the public told pollsters he should lose his job. Come to think of it, a year that caused Rumsfeld and DeLay as much discomfort as 2004 did is worthy of a toast.

Final Dispatch

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THE GOP's SABOTAGE - from page 5

Along with Medicare, Social Security is the key reason seniors are no longer the most impoverished class in our society or a crushing burden on their children. This last needs to be mentioned to counter the argument that ensuring the security of baby boom seniors would impose an intolerable burden on younger workers. For who is going to replace those Social Security checks, should they stop coming because Grandpa picked the wrong stock? The kids and grandkids, that's who, if they have any real family values.

I speak out of an experience I'm sure many of you share. My mother retired after forty years as a garment worker, after which she lived with me until she died at the thankfully old age of 88. Her presence was of great emotional value to our family, but because of her two-decade bout with Parkinson's, it would have represented a serious financial burden on my wife and me had it not been for government support.

The President says the system that has served us well in the past is no longer sustainable. He, or rather those cooking the books for him, attempts to scare us with projections that the Social Security trust fund will begin to run deficits thirty-eight years from now.

But those numbers assume no dramatic change in the increasing ability of seniors to retire later and otherwise continue to earn income that is taxable. The anti-Social Security crowd is trying to make this a young-versus-old generational fight, even though seniors still pay taxes like anybody else. We even pay taxes on most of our Social Security earnings, if our household income rises above a pittance.

If the President is truly worried about the federal coffers running dry he should stop cutting taxes for us better-off folk and stop spending so much money on boondoggles like the occupation of Iraq. However, if it turns out that we need additional taxes to cover the obligations of the Social Security trust fund four decades from now, so be it. After all, money distributed to the elderly through Social Security is poured right back into the economy.

For three-quarters of a century, Social Security has guaranteed us all a life of modest dignity as we live out the end of this mortal coil.

So--if you'll pardon this senior's use of a curmudgeonly truism--I say if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

CORRESPONDENCE

From RUDOLPH MARTINEZ, Seattle, WA.

"To the RUSTY HOOK

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

A special thanks to brothers and sisters for last year who made the Seattle ILWU pensioners work. PAUL McCABE and his wife for their respects to the membership. PAUL is on the PCPA executive board. Thank the Committee to the Public disclosure Commission.

RUDOLPH MARTINEZ, President

TERRY O'NEIL, Treasurer & Secretary Treasurer.

DICK MELTON, Vice president & Club Trustee.

JOHN JOHNSON, Recording Secretary.

BOB ROGERS, Executive Board member, has been involved in many sectors of the Club, has been making Bird Houses for the lottery to support our convention when it is held in Seattle., spent many days to put on our convention in Seattle and is now helping the Tacoma Pensioners Club to get their convention started.

Thanks to Brothers STEVE JACROIX, Club trustee and Sick Committee, and Secretary Treasurer relief.

ROBERT MACKNER, Trustee. He put together our yearly luncheon at the Burien Elks.

Thanks to the Editorial Staff of the RUSTY HOOK: FRED BERG, DEL CASTLE, CURT CUNNINGHAM and ART MINK - a task well done and appreciated.

And special thanks to BILL SAMPLE who, when asked to be Recording Secretary, never refused.

Thanks to DICK NELSON for selling tickets to our lottery to benefit our convention and collecting clothes for the United Farmworkers, toys for their children, warm coats and delivering them over the mountains to Sunnyside, WA.

Thanks to BOB SWANSON for cleaning our Club, painting, fixing things that go wrong, also for policing the outside of the building.

A special thanks to the Ladies Auxiliary, L. BOTLER, A. WILLIAMS, L. BYWATER for their home cooking luncheons they put on for the Pensioners Club. It was well appreciated

A special thanks to the Seattle ILWU Longshore Pensions Executive Board who attended to Pension Club business all year long. We always had a quorum.

Last but not least, a very special thanks to the membership who attend our membership meetings all year long that keeps our Club going.

CORRESPONDENCE

From LESLIE NORMAN WILSON, Seattle, WA.
"Please donate \$50.00 to the Longshore Pensioners Club and \$50.00 dollars from Local 52 for the RUSTY HOOK - \$100.00. Hello to all my old retired friends
Sincerely, LESLIE NORMAN WILSON, # 53273"

Thank you very much, NORMAN.

From RUTH LAURENT, Houston, TX.
RUTH donates \$20.00 . We appreciate money from a long ways away, especially from someone not connected with the waterfront. Thanks, RUTH.

From ROY and BERYL LARSON, Camano Is., WA.
No note, but paid back dues, 2002 - 2005 plus \$50.00 to the RUSTY HOOK. We appreciate your catching up on dues, and of course the \$50.00 dollars to the RUSTY HOOK.

From BERNICE VELATEGUI, Mercer Island, WA.
BERNICE donates \$50.00. No note, but we do really appreciate the fifty.

JOHN LAURENT, Sheffield, England.
JOHN donated \$20.00 while on a visit from England to observe the U.S. elections. He didn't like what he saw. Thanks, JOHN, we'll try to do better next time.

From JEAN BACKMAN, Ocean Shores, WA.
JEAN donates \$50.00 without a note. Many thanks, JEAN. The money counts, note or not.

From DAN SORENTINO, Seattle, WA.
Thanks DAN for \$50.00, no note, but just as welcome.

Lifetime Memberships

A single payment according to the following schedule,

Age 55 – 60 \$115.00

Age 60 – 70 \$ 95.00

Age 70 – 90 \$ 85.00

Special message to all lifetime members.

Lifetime membership does not include the assessment for the PCPA Conventions.

The assessment is \$3.00 per year .

A special note here - an overlooked letter from Brother GEORGE DALY that got delayed by someone (DEL CASTLE) putting GEORGE'S letter in his pocket and changing coats. It was written in February, and although it is late, it is very timely:

From GEORGE DALY, Midland, South Dakota.
"Hello Rudy, Bill and all.

I helped elect South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson at the last election in S. Dakota. Tom Dashle, the other Senator came to Portland to a meeting of the ILWU. He said there was no longshoremen in S. Dakota, but he supported our union. Anyway, I wrote him and told him, bull shit, there was a retired West Coast longshoreman in Midland, S.D. The State is conservative but we have 2 good Democratic Senators! Here is \$50 dollars and I will spend more before it is over. The propaganda on Radio and TV sounds like Hitler's Germany!!

Your union Brother, GEORGE DALY"

Many thanks, GEORGE for your donation, and apologies for having misplaced your good letter. We hope you continue corresponding.

From AUDREY DOREMUS, Everett, WA.
"Here is a little something for the HOOK. (\$25.00) Use it as you see fit. Thank you for all the work the men have done over the years. Without what we have, most of us would not be getting by. Wish this check could be more."

AUDREY DOREMUS,
PHIL DOREMUS, 56042 Deceased May 25, 1972"

Thank you ever so much, AUDREY. We specially appreciate donations from survivors who get by on less pension than members.

From LOIS STRANAHAN, Portland, OR.
I am sending a small contribution of \$25.00 please continue sending you wonderful job of labor news. I am also sending a little job that JESSE STRANAHAN was going to put in our Old Timers but had a heart attack and passed at 98. He was a giant of the labor movement.

Thank you LOIS for your contribution.



**Seattle ILWU
Pension Club**

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