

## **In the times of the Have-Nots and the Have Yachts**

**A few weeks ago all of the Republican legislators in Sacramento voted against a bill that would have taxed oil companies for the oil they extract from or refine in California. Every other state in the United States taxes oil companies for the oil they extract or refine in their state. Why not California? Laying off the 20,000 teachers in schools throughout the state this summer could be prevented with this one tax.**

**A few weeks before that, these same Republican legislators voted against closing the “Yacht loophole” which allows billionaires to avoid paying sales tax for their yachts and airplanes if they tuck them away in storage for three months. Why in the world would all of the Republicans vote against correcting such a blatant “let them eat cake” slap to the middle class face?**

**Why? Because as a group, the Republicans have vowed never to vote for a bill that will raise taxes. The world is crumbling around them and us and yet they will not raise taxes. Instead, they actually like the fact that public services, the infrastructure – roads, public utilities, etc., public school children, the elderly, sick and disabled will be shouldering the entire \$16 billion deficit on their backs.**

**This is part of the Grover Norquist policy of “shrinking government so small that you can drown it in the bathtub.” Every time the Republicans prevent a tax that will save public school teachers’ jobs, keep a health clinic open, provide services to seniors, they are moving us closer to their ideal; a world without government. A world of privatized services, military mercenaries, privatized water, toll roads, for-pay public toilets and most of all no restrictions on business, no environmental oversight, no health inspectors, etc. This is the Republican vision of Nirvana, a world of "you're on your own," or YOYO instead of "we're in this together," or WITT.**

**Is this the kind of world you envision for your children and grandchildren? A world of Have Nots and Have Yachts? A world where the economic disparity between the ultra rich and the rest of us widens with every quarterly report? A world of dog-eat-dog, laissez faire Capitalism where millions of people are now facing destitution? How did we come to this place and how are our California Republican legislators helping to solidify this economic disparity?**

**In post-World War II America, between 1947 and the early 1970's, all income groups shared in the nation's economic growth. Poor families actually had a higher growth in real annual income than other groups. It was a time of great prosperity for nearly everyone with a thriving middle class growing secure with full employment and good unions.**

The super-rich were boiling. They paid high taxes on the income they derived from the labor of the middle and lower class. FDR's, whom Bush's ancestors considered "a traitor to his class," had instituted "The New Deal" based on Keynesian economics. It had called for reigning in corporate power which, like today, had been unbridled during WWI causing the Great Depression. The genius of Keynesian economics was two fold: it created strict regulations and governmental oversight of corporations and it established a safety net – progressive taxation, the minimum wage, unemployment benefits, Social Security, Medicaid, public welfare, etc. to protect the middle and lower class from the verities of the Capitalist system. You might say that FDR "saved Capitalism" by providing stability and security during Capitalism's inevitable "bust" periods. You hear it decried by the Right today as "socialism" when in fact it moderated a perfect balance between Corporate wants and the people's needs.

But the ultra rich didn't see it that way. They despised this great experiment in wealth redistribution but were powerless under Democratic domination to restore the inequities they had enjoyed during the Gilded Age. Their avarice had no theoretical underpinnings. It was seen for what it was; rich, greedy people wanting to get richer. But in the late 40's their savior appeared.

Milton Friedman, a University of Chicago economist, created the perfect theoretical model to justify "free" market capitalism. Rather than have a balanced approach, he called for a Capitalist Fundamentalism: "Business – good, Government – bad." His "Chicago Boys" spread this orthodoxy all over the world, working with every CIA backed thug dictator from Pinochet to Suharto, complementing their reign of terror and using his "disaster Capitalism" – the rapid-fire corporate reengineering of societies reeling from shock, to dismantle democratic governments. The dissolution of civil rights as we have seen since 911 goes hand in hand with the institution of Capitalist Fundamentalism. Without a blink, they were able to eliminate Habeas Corpus and justify torture, invasion of our homes, wiretapping, etc. This is how they did it in Chile, Indonesia, Russia, etc. In every country where this Capitalist Fundamentalism has been instituted, it has failed miserably, has caused desperate poverty, economic collapse and the plundering of the resources by the ultra rich.

But this is the economic philosophy our California Republican "born-again Capitalist" legislators still subscribe to. These "true believers" have swallowed this Capitalist Fundamentalism hook, line and sinker. This is why they will never vote for tax increases. They want to kill government because they share the delusion that the "market" can solve all problems. Well the market cannot solve all problems. Look at the mess we are in with an economic crisis, an environment at the brink of collapse and our resources plundered by the corporations to make the ultra rich richer. Are we to give this world of the Have-Nots and the Have-Yachts to our children and grandchildren? I hope not. If we can change the two-thirds requirement for any tax bill to be passed in California to a simple majority, we can begin to restore the balance between the people's needs and Corporate wants.

**I am running as the Democratic candidate for the 38<sup>th</sup> Assembly seat in “Red” Santa Clarita to help dethrone one Capitalist Evangelical, Cameron Smyth (R). Democrats need 54 seats to change the requirement of two-thirds vote to simple majority on tax bills. If I receive assistance from Democrats in safe “Blue” districts I can be one of the four new Democrats which will allow us to make this vital change. November will tell us a lot about what kind of future we are leaving to our children. Please help me get elected.**

**Carole Lutness,  
Democratic Candidate – 38<sup>th</sup> AD**

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