

Montana Firefighters

**DAN LEAHY'S TALK: MAY 24, 2007: MONTANA FIRE FIGHTERS**

GOOD MORNING -- THANKS FOR THE INVITATION -- HOSPITALITY

(MONTANA: GRAND DAD AND BROTHERS CAME THROUGH BUTTE AS MINERS ON THEIR WAY FROM QUEBEC TO EASTERN WASHINGTON)

**ALWAYS GOOD TO STOP AND THINK.**

TALK ABOUT THE SITUATION WE ARE IN, OUR COMMUNITY IS IN AND OUR COUNTRY IS IN.

FOR ME, IT MADE ME THINK ABOUT WHY I AGREED TO GIVE THIS TALK.

CREATED THIS CHART (IN YOUR PACKETS) IN 1986-1987 FOR IAM STEWART TRAINING -- BOEING OR IAM -- 20 YEARS AGO.

**REASON IS: I STILL BELIEVE:**

MOBILIZED WORKING CLASS FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IS THE BEST THING ABOUT AMERICA... IN FACT, ITS DEFINITION.

STILL BELIEVE THAT UNIONS ATTACHED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND TAKING DIRECT ACTION TO MOBILIZE ITS CLASS AND CONFRONT THE OWNERS OF WEALTH ARE A REVOLUTIONARY FORCE AND BEST HOPE FOR PRESERVING OUR FREEDOM AND FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

## **TEACHING A CLASS ABOUT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

READING THIS BOOK: SUBTERRANEAN FIRE.

STUDENTS IN STUNNED SILENCE: KNOW NOTHING OF THIS HISTORY

YET, IT'S ABOUT THEM. THEIR PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS.  
PROBABLY WHY THEY CAN GO TO SCHOOL.

RECOMMEND IT TO YOU: READ/DEBATE IT. FIRE HALL SPACE.

### **THIS MORNING:**

READ A FEW STATISTICS. HIGHLIGHT THE SITUATION WE ARE IN.

GROUP CONVERSATION: CENTRAL CHALLENGES

COMMUNITY YOU LIVE IN  
YOUR UNION LOCAL  
OUR COUNTRY

WRITE IT DOWN – PASS IT UP OR GO TO THE MIKE

SHOW A 30 MINUTE VIDEO

1877 RAILWAY WORKERS STRIKE  
LOOK FOR COMPARABLE ISSUES TODAY  
WRITE DOWN AND DISCUSS

(BREAK)

HISTORY TALK: LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS

A FEW STATISTICS: HIGHLIGHT THE SITUATION WE ARE IN

**AMERICAN WORKING CLASS AND ITS UNIONS UNDER SUSTAINED ATTACK SINCE 1980.**

PATCO STRIKE	AUGUST 81	12,000 FIRED. NO SUPPORT
CONSTRUCTION TRADES		68-88; 80% TO 20%
UNION DENSITY FELL		8% OF PRIVATE SECTOR
SOCIAL WELFARE FLOOR		RIGHT TERMINATED (AFDC)
PRISON POPULATION DOUBLED		CLINTON YRS. NOW 4.2m no vote
PERMANENT REPLACEMENT		CONCESSIONS. LOCK OUTS.

**MEANING**

CONCENTRATION OF OUR WEALTH IN THE HANDS OF A FEW  
SPEED UP FOR US; FAMILIES + WAGE RATE DECLINE  
UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR OUR YOUNG  
PUBLIC SECTOR IS NEXT FOR EXTRACTION INTO THE MARKET.

**CONCRETELY WHAT DID THIS MEAN: (KEVIN PHILLIPS)**

**All of us paid a big price for this decline in union power. Let me cite some statistics from Kevin Phillips, an author and former advisor to President Nixon. These statistics are from Mr. Phillips book, Wealth and Democracy.**

From the mid 1970s to the 1990s, 70% of all earnings went to the richest 1% of the American people.

Between 1979 and 1989, the net worth of this richest 1% doubled. Between 1989 and 1999, their net worth increased 10 times. Their average net worth rose from \$230 million to \$2.6 billion

In 1999, this top 1% (2.7 million people) had as much to spend as the 100 million at the bottom of the income scale.

Between 1980 and 1999, the assets and profits of the 500 largest US corporations tripled while they eliminated 5 million jobs.

And, what happened to us? We were sped up – two wage earners now earn what one used to earn. We work more hours. Our leisure time fell, hypertension rose, and so did our tax burden.

### **LOOK AT WAGES**

1996 AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE 19% LOWER THAN 1973: \$315 TO \$256

1996 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME -- \$1000 LOWER IN 1989.

97 30% OF THOSE WORKING DO NOT WORK FULL TIME

66-01 PAYROLL TAXES GO UP: 19.5% TO 34.9%

WHILE CORPORATE TAXES DROP 23% TO 7.6% + CAP CAPITAL GAIN

05 MINIMUM WAGE LOWEST LEVEL IN 56 YEARS  
32% OF AVERAGE PRIVATE SECTOR WAG

OUR FUTURE EMPLOYER: WAL-MART

Average salary of full time wal-mart employee: \$17,500 per year

Corporation makes: \$10.5 billion in profits.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH: WAR OR WAL-MART

## **PUBLIC SECTOR**

### **1984 NATION AT RISK**

\$600 BILLION DOLLAR MARKET (PUBLIC EDUCATION) LEHMAN

DE-FUND TO WRECK. THEN VOUCHERS. CHARTERS.

STANDARDIZE TESTING TO CREATE FAILURES

LOW-WAGE WORK FORCE – NECESSITATE WAR FOR RIGHT TO ED.

### **BEST EXAMPLE OF WHAT THIS MEANS**

NEW ORLEANS – RESPONSE WAS HIGHLY EFFICIENT  
IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR EXTRACTION

PUBLIC EDUCATION  
PUBLIC HOUSING  
PUBLIC HOSPITAL  
PUBLIC POLICE  
THE PUBLIC ITSELF  
PUBLIC RELIEF

GATES AND CHARTERS  
CONDOS FOR THE WEALTHY  
MONEY FOR HEALTH  
BLACKWATER FROM IRAQ  
LARGEST DISASPORA  
REFUSAL TO USE FIREFIGHTERS (PR)

**PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS (JANUARY 07 BLS)**

2006 12.0% OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS IN UNIONS (20.1% IN 83)  
15.4 MILLION MEMBERS. (FELL BY 326,000 IN 2006)

2006 36.2% PUBLIC ARE UNION MEMBERS. 7.4% IN PRIVATE SECTOR

2006 WITHIN PUBLIC SECTOR, LOCAL GOVT HAS HIGHEST: 41.9%

2006 BY OCCUPATION: PROTECTIVE SERVICES: 34.7 % UNION.