

Live Bait & Ammo #127: Two Tiered Too Long

The credit crisis jammed the automakers' restructuring plan like a semi jackknifed on the highway. But the rescue plan reveals a more insidious malady than credit default swaps and pimped out politicians. Two tier.

Two tier has morphed from a union concession in collective bargaining to a standard American bias. Two tier is a whopping bonus to the rich and a moral hazard whip to the poor. Two tier delivers bailouts to the investor class and foreclosures to the outsourced class.

Two tier is not a cure, it's a curse.

Two tier demands more jails and less schools; more arsenals and less tools; more greed and less kindness; more revenge and less justice.

Two tier is not a solution to economic crisis. Two tier is a symptom of social decadence.

Master Madoff couldn't devise a more sinister method of bankrupting a family every hour of every day than our two tier system of health insurance. But health care for profit is just another symptom of social decay in the land of the free marketeer and the home of the wage slave.

People express outrage when executives at AIG are rewarded for failure but Delphi workers are used to it. Every three months for the last three years Judge Drain has awarded millions of dollars in bonuses to the very executives whose mismanagement and fraud drove Delphi into a J.P. Morgan financed bankruptcy.

Who believes the government will manage GM and Chrysler differently in a so called "surgical bankruptcy"?

We know where all the cuts will come.

Workers take pay cuts, job cuts, benefit cuts. Executives take home cash in wheel barrows.

The crisis in manufacturing can't be quarantined in Detroit or amputated with buy outs. Every manufacturer in America is on the gurney. We are merging into the ranks of nations who are neither self-sufficient nor independently wealthy. No one needs or desires to import our financial wizardry.

Manufacturing in the US hasn't failed from a lack of skills or productivity. It was waylaid by a lack of political will to provide (1) universal single payer health care and (2) investment in products that confront the dual challenge of environmental crisis and energy independence.

Government support for more concessions rather than long term investment means more of the same. Two tier is the predicate of class conflict.

A society that degrades rather than rewards labor is self destructive, not competitive. Two tier may prevail in the precincts of law and yellow dog contracts, but sooner or later the underclass will push the pendulum back.

Some of us aren't waiting for leaders to emerge.

When Magna Inc. and their UAW partners presented workers at New Process Gear in Syracuse, NY with an ultimatum—accept more concessions or the plant will close—workers voted to close. Twice. Within weeks of the first vote Magna was back with another offer, but workers had had enough.

Every crisis has a bottom.

Bottom isn't a wage cut, a speed up, or an unfair labor practice. Bottom is the point at which one worker says to another worker, "Enough is enough", and together they begin pushing back.

Are we there yet? Are we ready for a national strike? Are citizens ready to defy the corporate state? To occupy Congress?

Not just yet, but I wouldn't park on the tracks.

Our soldiers are coming home and they've been two tiered too long.

sos, Gregg Shotwell

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