

# You Want MORE?

October 2, 2013

Fewer than two weeks before the US House of Representatives brought on the government shutdown, it voted (9/19/13) by a slim margin to cut \$40 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, over the next 10 years. Now, \$4 billion a year may not seem like much, given the enormous figures our "leaders" play with, but it will mean that a great many families as well as individuals will not have enough to eat.

Remember in the public TV film of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, when Oliver's stomach is calling out for a little supplement to the skimpy bowl of gruel he was given? Oliver asks, "May I have more, sir?" The very well fed overlord of the kitchen indignantly says, "You want MORE?" How dare a child want adequate nutrition!!!

For some strange reason, mothers and fathers want their little children to have enough caloric intake, of the right sorts of things, for their brains to develop adequately (and their muscles and their growth hormones). Without that happening, we're going to have millions of kids who won't be able to stay focused in class, who won't be able to think properly or quickly, whose growth will be stunted and whose muscles remain pretty slack.

In the meantime, Jamie Dimon of JP Morgan Chase and Lloyd Blankfein of Goldman Sachs, along with the rest of the one percent, will have billions of dollars from which to feed their own children. Why, they could fly themselves and their kids to Shanghai if they suddenly develop a craving for dim sum!! Then they could fly them right back to the edges of Wall Street for a New York-style bagel, with some cream cheese and lox. The following day, Dimon and Blankfein and their oh-so-fortunate ilk could fly them to Barcelona for some paella or Tel Aviv for some falafel and hummus!

There's something very wrong with this picture. Adjusting the volume or the focus won't help. It's the stark contrast between that picture and our founding ideals that's the problem. If "all men are created equal" and "equal justice under law" are realities, and not just oh-so-pretty words, how come one kid can't focus or think fast and another develops a tummy ache from too many pot stickers? How come a young Black man who steals an I-Phone to afford some decent food goes to jail and Dimon or Blankfein, who stole billions of dollars from old people's 401(k)s by their reckless CDO and derivatives gambling fly their families to the Pearl River Delta?

It's because those who are on top of the societal pyramid care very little if at all for the rest of us who are at its base.

What's the solution?

We've got to get enough of us together, from the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, La Raza, the NAACP, NOW, AARP, GLAAD and the hundreds of millions of us who live in the same communities as each other, to gather our figurative pitchforks and our torches, and walk vigorously, with songs of freedom and equality bursting forth from our lungs and larynxes, to the gated neighborhoods of our "betters." Maybe we could liberate a drone and an APC or Humvee or two or three and burst our way into those walled communities.

What follows will be a reckoning. The walls will come tumbling down, the coffers reluctantly opened and many millions of kids will eat well for maybe the first time in their lives. We'll have upended the pyramid. Those on the bottom will now be on top, and our society's values and practices will

radically change. There might be freedom, justice and equal opportunity for all for really the first time in our country's history. The daughters and sons of former slaves will sit down at the table of personhood and plenty with the daughters and sons of former slaveholders.

There is not "just" chattel slavery. There is economic slavery. It must end and a genuinely new era begin. If we want more, we can have more. There is plenty. It just needs to be apportioned far better than it's been.

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