



...from the Hall

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A newsletter by and for the members of *PACE* Local 8-237
Tacoma, Washington

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The President's Corner

—by Chuck Whitt

The Standing Committee of Local 8-237 had a fourth step meeting a couple of weeks ago. The fourth step of our grievance procedure calls for the mill manager and International Representative to meet and discuss the grievances at hand. As frequently happens, there was a discussion following the meeting between Don Johnson and Al Lippincott on the state of the industry. They share their knowledge about what's going on in the paper business.

Of note at this meeting was a talk of the consolidation in the industry. With Georgia-Pacific, International Paper and Smurfit-Stone gobbling up mill after mill, a notion was expressed by DJ that our niche market could be threatened if these manufacturers bought their way into a market that competes directly against us.

I left the meeting with the realization of how tenuous the situation is in our chosen profession. We're a small mill and could be driven out of business if forces aligned against us bought their way into our market.

In addition to attending grievance meetings, I continue to visit other mills and industries in my work with the International. Last night, in a visit to the AWPPW Local 5 paper mill in Camas, Washington, I was made aware of a situation in one of their units. At the BBA plant they represent, the company has proposed eliminating their retirement plan, many of their holidays, vacation weeks, medical for their extra board, overtime, meal tickets, and call time. The company plans to reduce seniority provisions, allow supervisors to do union work, as well as a host of other drastic changes. They tell the union they need these changes to keep the plant open. Just another lap in the race downward that we have seen occurring over the last few years.

It seems that all of the manufacturing industries I visit are under assault. Maybe not to the extent the BBA employees are, but in ways that change and harm those of us who just want to make a living.

The reports of mills closing down continue to come in. The Georgia-Pacific mill in Bellingham is only the latest under threat (they closed their pulp mill in 2001). And to add insult to injury, many workers are finding their last job is packaging up the machinery they used to run so that it can be shipped off to China or some other cheap labor market.

Robert Hughes of U.S.A. Machinery reports that.

"Foreign sales represent a bright spot for used machinery. "Most of our inquiries today are coming from overseas—from China, India, Pakistan and Kuwait. We're not selling a lot, but at least they are coming over and inspecting the equipment."

We need to stop the bleeding in American manufacturing. We need to stop foreign manufacturers from using our laws against us. We need to stop American manufacturers from moving their operations offshore. We need to reinforce the rights of unions so that companies do not play us off against non-union workers. We need to make it easier for employees who so choose to form and join unions in their workplace. We need to reign in the costs to companies, of which one of the greatest is medical cost.

Because we need to do these things, and we need to do them soon, I will be supporting Senator John Kerry for President. He will renegotiate the free trade agreements President Bush has made with Central and South American countries, as well as others. He will change the tax laws to stop the exodus of American manufacturing that currently uses our tax dollars to eliminate our jobs. He will allow employees to form unions through the card check-off standards used in most industrialized countries and will force companies into binding arbitration when they refuse to negotiate fairly. John Kerry will address the medical crisis that costs us more each year by using the economic might of the American economy to bargain for lower health care costs (which Bush made illegal in his Medicare "reform" law).

"Just the Facts, Ma'am"

In the Vice Presidential debate last month, Vice President Dick Cheney asked viewers to go to "factcheck.com" to verify John Edwards claims about Halliburton.

Though he undoubtedly meant www.factcheck.org (factcheck.com takes you to an anti-Bush web site), I was thrilled with the recommendation!

I have always thought the truth matters, and during the Clinton administration, Republicans wanted us to believe it was important to them too. So I have been a frequent visitor to factcheck.org, as well as snopes.com, mythbusters.com and other myth debunking web sites.

But in this instance, let's look at factcheck.org. The day following the debate my daily email from fac-

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tcheck.org listed these issues:

"Cheney wrongly implied that FactCheck had defended his tenure as CEO of Halliburton Co., and the vice president even got our name wrong. He overstated matters when he said Edwards voted "for the war" and "to commit the troops, to send them to war." He exaggerated the number of times Kerry has voted to raise taxes, and puffed up the number of small business owners who would see a tax increase under Kerry's proposals."

Adding up the corrections factcheck.org made after this debate, I count 11 corrections to the facts Cheney stated vs. 3 corrections for Edwards.

Following the second Presidential Debate, this is what was listed on their home page:

*Distortions Galore at Second Presidential Debate
10.09.2004*

Examples: Bush forgets he owns a tree-growing company. Kerry again inflates job-loss figures.

*Cheney & Edwards Mangle Facts
10.06.2004*

Getting it wrong about combat pay, Halliburton, and FactCheck.org

*Bush Mischaracterizes Kerry's Health Plan
10.04.2004*

Bush claims Kerry's plan puts "bureaucrats in control" of medical decisions, "not you, not your doctor." But experts don't agree with that.

*Distortions and Misstatements At First Presidential Debate
10.01.2004*

Bush and Kerry both have problems with the facts at their meeting in Coral Gables

*Kerry Ad Falsely Accuses Cheney on Halliburton
09.30.2004*

Contrary to this ad's message, Cheney doesn't gain financially from the contracts given to the company he once headed.

*The "Willie Horton" Ad Of 2004?
09.28.2004*

Republican group's ad shows Osama, Kerry. It appeals to fear, and twists Kerry's record on defense, intelligence, Iraq.

Adding up the score from factcheck.org after the second Presidential debate, I have 8 lies or distortions for Bush vs. 3 for Kerry.

Factcheck.org is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It was started in 1994 by philanthropist Walter Annenberg. It



is highly respected by all sides as devoted to the truth, as seen by Cheney's reference to it. I recommend that you check it out for yourself, because the truth should matter.

Just something to think about:

Dan Rather, CBS News Anchor

1. Given documents he thought were true.
2. Failed to thoroughly investigate the facts.
3. Reported documents to the American people as true to make his case.
4. When confronted with the facts apologized and launched an investigation.
5. Number of Americans dead: 0.
6. May be fired as CBS News Anchor.

George W. Bush, President of the United States

1. Given documents he thought were true.
2. Failed to thoroughly investigate the facts.
3. Reported documents to the American people as true to make his case.
4. When confronted with the facts continued to report untruth and stonewalled an investigation.
5. Number of Americans dead: over 1000
6. May be given four more years as President of the United States.

Say What?

"And the question in my mind is how many additional American casualties is Saddam worth? And the answer is not very damned many. So I think we got it right, both when we decided to expel him from Kuwait, but also when the president made the decision that we'd achieved our objectives and we were not going to go get bogged down in the problems of trying to take over and govern Iraq... All of a sudden you've got a battle

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you're fighting in a major built-up city, a lot of civilians are around, significant limitations on our ability to use our most effective technologies and techniques. Once we had rounded him up and gotten rid of his government, then the question is what do you put in its place? You know, you then have accepted the responsibility for governing Iraq." - vice president Dick Cheney, 1992.

The \$87 Billion Dollar Question

That \$87 billion that appears in the right-wing's sound bite over and over again, "First I voted against it and then I voted for it", etc., to demonstrate that John Kerry is a flip flopper.

There were two proposals. One would have us giving them the money and the other one is what John Kerry supported, which would have had the Iraqis paying for THEIR own redevelopment and their own defense from their own oil. Bush, of course makes it seem like Kerry was against it all. He wasn't.

The Republican bill, which was pushed by the White House was a scam. From their 87 billion give-away, \$400 million was for maximum-security prisons. That's \$50,000 a bed; \$800 million for international police training for 1,500 officers, that's **\$530,000 an officer**; Consultants at \$200,000 a year. That's double normal pay. It is double their profit margin too? And \$164 million to develop a curriculum for training Iraqi soldiers. Why does it cost that much to **develop a curriculum**? And \$1.4 billion to reimburse cooperating nations for logistical, military and other support provided to U.S. military operations; \$100 million for the "United States Emergency Fund for Complex Foreign Crisis"; \$15.5 million to the European Command for countries directly supporting the war on terror.

The Senate Bill (S.1689) on funding the war in Iraq was largely about how we would pay for the war George Bush started. Remember all the debate about asking the Iraqis to use their oil funds in their own reconstruction? Senator Kerry voted to have the Iraqis contribute 50%, \$10 million, to their own reconstruction. The majority of members in the Senate agreed with that position. Senator Kerry also voted to suspend the tax cuts for the richest Americans to the tune of \$90 million to pay for the war. Again, a majority of the Senate agreed with Senator Kerry and passed the amendment.

Those were the "yes" votes.

President Bush then threatened to veto the bill (threatened to withhold the war funding) if that bill was passed. It passed out of the Senate on a roll call vote of

96-3. The Senator, by a huge majority, thought it was sensible to ask the country with the second largest oil reserves in the world to help finance their reconstruction.

After being sent to conference with the House of Representatives to reconcile the two bills, the provisions were deleted. The final bill passed the Senate by a vote of 87-12.

That was the "No" vote.

So, as you can see, the facts on the \$87 Billion appropriation were twisted to make Kerry look bad and unpatriotic. This also shows that it's important to verify the facts coming from this Administration. They will stop at nothing to secure a second term for themselves.

The following is from the debate on the final bill. This is clipped right out of the congressional register, the minutes of Congress. You can see it at: <http://thomas.loc.gov>, search on S.1689.

Mr. DURBIN

So today we consider this supplemental appropriations bill to provide the money that our men and women need to sustain the military effort in Iraq and to come home safely. All of these funds are emergency spending. What that means, of course, is that we are not cutting other Government spending nor raising taxes to find the \$87 billion. We are adding this money to America's mortgage. This is our second mortgage on America, \$87 billion--the greatest deficit in the history of the United States, and it continues to grow as this administration continues to call for more tax cuts for wealthy people. This, unfortunately, is part of our legacy.

One of the most difficult parts of this bill is the fact that this conference committee stripped out the provision the Senate added on a bipartisan rollcall vote. Republicans and Democrats came together and said at least \$10 billion of the \$20 billion to reconstruct Iraq should come from the Iraqi people, from their oil reserves. Is that an incredible request, that this country with the second largest oil reserve in the world would help to pay for its own infrastructure? The Bush administration said it was unacceptable. No loan provision will be put in this bill. If anyone has to borrow money to build Iraq, it will be America's families, not the people of Iraq. That is a sad outcome.

Paul Wolfowitz, on March 27, 2003, testifying before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said as follows:

And on rough recollection, the oil revenues of that country could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next 2 or 3 years. We're dealing

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with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon.

Assistant Secretary Wolfowitz said those words to this Congress 6 months ago. This man, who was urging America to invade Iraq and telling us they could pay for their own reconstruction, and where are we today? The Bush administration has rejected the idea that Iraq would pay for this. No, American taxpayers have to pay for it. It has to come out of the Social Security trust fund. It has to come out of investments in education and health care in America. The Bush administration insists on it.

Listen to what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said on the same day:

I don't believe the United States has the responsibility for reconstruction, in a sense and the funds can come from those various sources I mentioned: frozen assets, oil revenues and a variety of other things, including the Oil for Food, which has a very substantial number of billions of dollars in it.

I also want to say we are paying a great amount of money out of our Federal Treasury to search for weapons of mass destruction. I cannot disclose the sum because it is classified. Trust me, it is very large. The Iraq Survey Group is in this so far futile search for weapons of mass destruction. I asked in this bill that they at least give us a quarterly report on what progress was being made. That was stripped out of the bill--no report necessary.

The amendment would require the special adviser to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency for the strategy in Iraq, Dr. David Kay, to provide both classified and unclassified written status to Congress on a quarterly basis. That accountability was removed in this bill.

Another provision that was stripped out of this bill relates to profiteering by corporations out to make a buck on a war. During World War II, Harry Truman called war profiteering treason. President Franklin Roosevelt said: I do not want to see a single war millionaire created in the United States as a result of this world disaster.

But when the Appropriations Committee considered this bill, they deleted an amendment by Senator Leahy, Senator Feinstein, and myself to criminalize war profiteering, price gouging and fraud. The same law that was passed during World War II was stripped out in confer-

ence. I do not understand it. I do not understand how anyone could be opposed to prosecuting those who want to defraud and overcharge the U.S. Government and the American taxpayers in time of war. It is unseemly that this has been stripped out in light of questionable no-bid and secretly bid contracts that have been let for Iraq construction.

I believe the sensible loan provisions which Senator Dorgan from North Dakota, who is now in the Chamber, supported, as well as his effort to say that the Iraqis will pay for the cost of the war with their own oil were just sensible. They are what American families would say, but unfortunately it is not what the Bush administration would say, and those have been removed.

This deletion of the reservist pay provision is one which I hope we can visit again. I hope next time instead of 96 to 3, we will have a 100-to-0 vote in the Senate. Maybe that is what it takes to convince conferees to stay with a provision once we have adopted it in the Senate.

Bush's hometown paper (The Lonestar Iconoclast) endorses Kerry.

Kerry Will Restore American Dignity

2004 Iconoclast Presidential Endorsement

Few Americans would have voted for George W. Bush four years ago if he had promised that, as President, he would:

- Empty the Social Security trust fund by \$507 billion to help offset fiscal irresponsibility and at the same time slash Social Security benefits.
- Cut Medicare by 17 percent and reduce veterans' benefits and military pay.
- Eliminate overtime pay for millions of Americans and raise oil prices by 50 percent.
- Give tax cuts to businesses that sent American jobs overseas, and, in fact, by policy encourage their departure.
- Give away billions of tax dollars in government contracts without competitive bids.
- Involve this country in a deadly and highly questionable war, and
- Take a budget surplus and turn it into the worst deficit in the history of the United States, creating a debt in just four years that will take generations to repay.

These were elements of a hidden agenda that surfaced only after he took office.

The publishers of The Iconoclast endorsed Bush four years ago, based on the things he promised, not on this smoke-screened agenda.

Today, we are endorsing his opponent, John Kerry, based not only on the things that Bush has delivered, but also on the vision of a return to normality that Kerry says our country needs.

[See the whole story at:
<http://www.iconoclast-texas.com/Columns/Editorial/editorial39.htm>]