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## What We Owe to Lee and the Train Wreck

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"You can't hide a train wreck!" was heard to be uttered by Ivy Ledbetter Lee -- father of the modern public relations industry and spokesperson for the Pennsylvania Railroad -- after a disastrous collision in the 1930s between two trains from the Pennsylvania and New Jersey lines.

Lee convinced his employer, Pennsylvania Railroad, to wage a massive public relations campaign in the media on a scale that would outweigh the likes of Firestone Tires and Ford Motor Company.

In this collision many people died, though Mr. Lee's sentiment would haunt American corporations and governments alike for years to come. A press agent later described Lee's newfound business as "... not the dissemination of truth, but the avoidance of its inopportune discovery." So marks today's public relations era.

Compare this with our own modern train wreck, the result of the global economy and its soothsayers. Among them is George Mankiw, chairman of the president's Council of Economic Advisers. At a speech expected to be anything but rosy, Mankiw's "Economic Report to the President" outlined the inalienable truths of the global trade theorists: Outsourcing is just a new way of doing international trade, and goods are better bought abroad when they are of a lower price.

Congressional Republicans and Democrats went after Mankiw, and he later took back his words. President Bush rightly criticized Mankiw in a gentlemanly address in Pennsylvania: "There are people looking for work because jobs have gone overseas. We need to act to make sure there are more jobs at home." Here, here.

Congress and the president should be worried about their own jobs as well. House speaker Denny Hastert later wrote a letter to Mankiw, stating that his position was unwarranted and untimely in an era where job loss is skyrocketing from traceable economic policies. But Mr. Mankiw was merely reciting the standard line of most of the free traders that plague the GOP and the Bush cabinet today.

Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry has already seized on the opportunity. He summed up Mankiw's arguments in one sound bite: "They said that shipping American jobs overseas is good for America."

With the front page story that Ralph Nader will again avenge from the Green Party in 2004, the GOP probably has less to worry about this election in terms of number of issues. Bush is generally on solid ground in middle America against a populist-left candidate from Connecticut like Nader and a liberal Democrat from Massachusetts like Kerry.

However, politics aside, what will America have to stand on after her manufacturing and information technology base is completely eroded?

Presidents of history -- Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln -- knew that for this country to remain the superpower that she is, America must rest on the strength of her industrial base. If America, home of the entrepreneurial spirit and providential will to overcome, ceases to produce from within and compete with our industries here at home, what will become of America as industrial superpower?

With troops stretched thin and bases on nearly every continent, we are wearing out our wartime welcome abroad. With Mr. Bush's erroneous guest worker program, we are literally advertising to billions from the world's poorest unemployed labor force -- eternally willing to work for a lower wage than any American -- that a job is available here.

Moreover, these policies do nothing to fix the pressing economic instability problems abroad caused by oppressive anti-democratic regimes, demanding another IMF bailout from American taxpayers. Truth be told, for every manufacturing and service job left in the United States, there will be a worker abroad who will always work for half.

One cannot deny the consequences for our standard of living and national identity. With an increased third world population unwilling to speak our language and assimilate into our melting pot upon arrival, this will amount to numerous cultural and societal problems that no one is braced to handle. The Democrats' call for an increase in the minimum wage and universal health care will ring true with more Americans to pick up the slack, and the end of free enterprise as we know it will be at hand.

Our nation's schools and universities will continue to become bloated with more federal aid and intervention in the name of "No Child Left Behind," and an increased call for multiculturalism and "tolerance for non-Western views" will be heard from the left. Increased police forces will be needed where crime increases between rivaling and unassimilated cultural enclaves become the norm, particularly along the Southern border, America's cultural drain.

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On many issues it can be said that Libertarians are barking up the wrong side of the tree, rooted mostly in what "America First" conservatives and they differ on as a function of societal and economic progress; however, on what Lew Rockwell calls the welfare-warfare state their arguments are sound, if it weren't for their call for open borders and unrestricted free trade to erode the rest of their principled arguments on the subject. The latter positions are most definitely not conservative, against the arguments of George F. Will and the Wall Street Journal to the contrary.

At the outset of this debate is that with which the the labor force of next generation must contend. Information technology graduates must look forward to the year of the H1-B and L-1 work visa. The notion of training the next foreign worker for their job plagues the industry. Like addicts enrolled in Al-Anon, the GOP and the neo-conservatives in the Bush cabinet appear unwilling to take the first step to admit the problem.

On the economy, the Democratic answer is usually to increase the welfare state with unemployment benefits, free health care, and bigger entitlements for citizens and illegal aliens. Many Republicans, well intentioned supply-siders they may be, perpetuate globalist nonsense to prop up multi-national competitors in the hopes of increasing capital investment in the United States.

Both of these dynamics are failing, and America should rightly decide who should lead and who should get out. Will the Bush Republicans be the party of President McKinley's full dinner pail or Chairman Mankiw's full garbage pail?

That this debate continues should be a tip of the cap to Mr. Lee.

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