



THE POLITICS OF DISPARITY

"[T]he more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer." --Benjamin Franklin

For much of the 20th century, the purveyors of classism have sought to further their agendas by way of insidious economic propaganda, classifying groups on the basis of material wealth, and then pitting those with less against those with more.

John Adams wrote, "The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the laws of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence. If 'Thou shalt not covet' and 'Thou shalt not steal' were not commandments of Heaven, they must be made inviolable precepts in every society before it can be civilized or made free." But wealth confiscation and redistribution is the foundation of the [Socialist Democrat Party](#) today.

Democrats depend on class warfare for their power. Indeed, the divide-and-conquer strategy of keeping an entire segment of the population addicted to government handouts while simultaneously demonizing another more successful segment too often succeeds in retaining sleazy pols. And it hurts all concerned.

Aware that for most people perception is reality, class warriors incessantly complain of the expanding gap between "rich" and "poor," by which they mean the rich are getting richer at the expense of the poor. In fact, all boats rise with the tide -- the poor are getting richer, too. Unfortunately, too many Americans

believe the lie because of its constant repetition in the media and in our public schools. These political pawns have been brainwashed to discount any hint of economic wisdom from "mean-spirited" conservatives and they thus become self-aggrandizing "victims."

While the Left's propagandists endlessly decry the "failing Bush economy," every month the economy's continuing stellar performance puts the lie to their charges. Since May 2003, when President Bush's across-the-board tax cuts finally took effect, the economy (read: not the government) has created 4.7 million jobs, and unemployment has plummeted from 6.1 to the current 4.8 percent.

The economics of tax cuts are really quite simple: Capital is freed for reinvestment in business. Thus, if a business owner is taxed at a lower rate, he has more money for expanding, hiring and buying more equipment and supplies. On the other hand, forced redistribution of business wealth achieves the exact opposite. To see this truism at work, one need look no further than Michigan, whose economy thrived under the tax-cutting policies of three-term Republican governor John Engler, but now ranks dead last in nearly every economic category under tax-happy Democrat Jennifer Granholm.

As for taxes paid, in 2003 (the latest figures available), the top half of wage earners paid nearly 97 percent of all taxes, while those in the top one percent paid more than 34 percent -- an average rate of more than 24 percent per household. On the other hand, the lower half of wage earners paid less than 3.5 percent of all income taxes. Thus, "tax cuts for the rich" are inherent in any tax cut, since the "rich" pay most of the taxes.

But who are these "rich"? The top 50 percent of wage earners includes individuals or couples filing jointly

who earned \$29,019 or more in a given year. Thirty grand a year hardly evokes images of lavish wealth. Wage earners in the top one percent make \$295,495 and up. So we're not talking all millionaires here either, though the Left wants you to hate them anyway. If you're one of those who "won life's lottery," you must be made to feel guilty and "share" your wealth.

Statistics, in fact, show that the majority of Americans are within a few percentage points of each other. Yet, the Left reckons the "poor" using the relative European method -- that is, we're all poor compared to George Soros. Never ones to let the facts get in the way, classists continue to declare that the poor are getting poorer. Yet despite the Left's endless bellyaching and prophecies of doom, the poverty rate has stayed nearly the same for several years.

As for government intervention to "correct" this disparity (which the government has no Constitutional authority to do), the way to reduce the poverty rate is simple: More tax cuts, more deregulation, much less government spending, and then -- get out of the way.

Benjamin Franklin observed, "I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. ... Repeal that [welfare] law, and you will soon see a change in their manners. St. Monday and St. Tuesday, will soon cease to be holidays. Six days shalt thou labor, though one of the old commandments long treated as out of date, will again be looked upon as a respectable precept; industry will increase, and with it plenty among the lower people; their circumstances will mend, and more will be done for their happiness by inuring them to provide for themselves, than could be done by dividing all your estates among them."

Unfortunately for too many Americans, Leftist politicians continue to make them easy in their poverty.

Thomas Jefferson said it more succinctly: "Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition."

Beyond the rhetoric, two foundational ideas are utterly lost on the Left. Where the Declaration of Independence says "created equal," liberals, after discarding "created," focus on "equal," interpreting it to mean equal result. It is their self-anointed duty, then, to ensure equality of result in all aspects of life by playing Robin Hood. (Winston Churchill once noted, "You don't make the poor richer by making the rich poorer.") Indeed, the princes of thieves have it exactly backwards. Our Founders' clear intent was the freedom to pursue happiness, which is why they said nothing about the attainment of happiness.

Secondly, in our fallen world, as Jesus Himself reminded us, "You have the poor with you always." Inequality of wealth is a function of free-market economics, and despite liberal whining, it is not necessarily a bad thing. Jesus taught His followers to care for the poor themselves -- not with grants from Caesar. Meanwhile, liberals (and "compassionate conservatives") are exceedingly generous with other people's confiscated money. In big, bloated, debt-ridden government, this is called "compassion." In our humble shop, we call it stealing.

Class warriors disparage both rich and poor. "The rich didn't earn what they have, and they should be forced to share. The poor can't make it without our help because they're obviously incapable." Fortunately, the Demos are getting less mileage out of their constant demeaning of achievers and despicable exploitation of the poor.

A truly classy warrior, Ronald Reagan saw heroes in all walks of life where the Left sees only greed and incompetence. He also understood the classists: "The trouble with our liberal friends is not that they're

ignorant; it's just that they know so much that isn't so." And when it comes to the myth of inequality, it just isn't so.