

10/2003

Re: Class Warfare

Dear Editors,

It is interesting to note that upon taking office, President Reagan changed the portrait of Thomas Jefferson in the Cabinet Room of the White House for that of Calvin Coolidge. Coolidge was the first president to articulate the effectiveness of deficit spending in order to transfer large amounts of capital from the poor to the wealthy. This is because the interest on the national debt is paid by all tax payers but is only received by shareholders of large banks and bonds, primarily the rich. Reagan quickly ran up the largest deficit in the history of the United States, only to be surpassed by George Bush Sr, and surpassed yet again by George Bush Jr (with the largest budget surplus in US history by Clinton sandwiched between the last two). This cash transfer is significant (\$318 billion this last fiscal year 2003) which constitutes about 10% of the annual federal budget. As Senator Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois) once said: "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money".

Although Republicans have claimed in the past to be the party of fiscal responsibility, it is clear from spending patterns in the last 20 years, that an anti-Robin Hood effort to rob the poor and give to the rich is the standard operating procedure of the GOP. The current agenda (tax cuts, off-shore corporations, no bid contracts, etc.), by Bush and the neo-conservatives, is indeed class warfare and of the most despicable sort that can be imagined. The most vulnerable members of our society are being mugged by those born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Ironically, many of the victims of this class warfare voted for Bush in 2000 based on his carefully designed folksy "I'm just a poor simple guy like you" campaign tactics.

John Donovan
Eugene, OR