

“You Didn’t Build That”

Class warfare took a new and dismal turn when President Barack Obama recently uttered this timeless denunciation of the entrepreneurial spirit. He also disclosed the underlying strategy Democrats hope will carry them to four more years’ control of the executive branch, if not the full legislature as well.

Until now the demonization of risk takers by campaign Democrats has been limited to Mitt Romney in his private equity role at Bain Capital. Now, with Mr. Obama’s open declaration of war on risk takers, anyone who seeks to better him or herself by private enterprise is fair game for derision and worse. Someone like Robert Redmond, whose Six and Twenty Distillery in Easley will soon begin production, or Ed Harris, whose successful enterprises dot the upstate – and who seeks a seat in the Statehouse as a conservative petition candidate – can now be cut down to size in an appeal for the votes of their employees and anyone else who looks with envy on someone who by his or her own effort has built a profitable business.

It’s a winning strategy for Democrats because decent ordinary working men and women always have and always will greatly outnumber the relative few who go into business on their own. Yet a free society cannot survive without an ever-growing number of individuals willing to take risks, willing to venture into the marketplace to succeed or fail on the merits of the service or product they provide the public.

We thus see how a winning strategy for Democrats is a losing one for those Americans who hope to avoid the kind of ongoing socioeconomic implosion we view daily in Europe. For if the profits of German industry and effort can be tapped to fund generous social welfare to unproductive Greeks, Spaniards and Italians, then why shouldn’t well-off, productive Americans be tapped for ever-larger contributions to the general welfare? Fine in theory and Democrat rhetoric. In practice, though, as the Europeans are learning and as we must eventually learn, it is a pattern that spells doom to a system based on individual effort and individual liberty.

But who’s to say whether Democrats can ride this hoary old engine of class warfare to another election victory? American voters, that’s who; decent Americans who understand the difference between acceptable political debate and the venomous utterances of Democrats whose hopes for their nation extend no further than winning the next election.