Regardless of what you may think about the Obama presidency, don't be hoodwinked into believing that he is advocating class war.

By BILL FLETCHER JR.

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It always amazes me when the Republicans start yelling about how liberals and progressives are engaged in class warfare. Think about it for a minute. Since about 30 seconds after Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, the Republicans have been waging what can only be described as a bitter class war against middle income and poor people. Tax cuts for the rich; cuts in social services; increased taxes on the middle income and poor hidden as "fees." It has been relentless. And in the current period, we have been hearing time and again how it is somehow unfair for the rich and super-rich to pay their fair share of taxes. Yet for Republicans it is important that the middle income and poor pay more. On top of this, Congressman Ryan and his cabal of Republicans want to undermine Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Am I missing something? If this is not class warfare against working people I have no idea how to otherwise describe it.

Yet in this case when President Obama, who has not exactly torched Wall Street, proposed to make the rich pay their fair share of taxes in order for us to move forward with job creation and the protection of the social safety net, suddenly the Republicans yell 'class war' and want to create a national panic. For this reason, it is critical for us to understand what the Republican game-plan is. It comes down to something that we began seeing glimpses of during the 2008 financial collapse: blame the middle income and poor people for the state of the economy.

Rather than admitting that the antics of Wall Street and their wild financial speculation brought about the creation of an unsustainable investment bubble (otherwise known as a pyramid scheme or Ponzi scheme) they want to deflect any and all criticisms and create scapegoats. We started seeing this in the fall of 2008 and we have continued hearing it, including suggestions recently by some conservative political theorists that poor people voting is a bad idea.

Yes, there is and has been a class war underway. It has been waged against middle income and poor people since at least 1981. It has focused on increasing the wealth and power of the upper levels of this society, i.e., the upper 10 percent (millionaires and billionaires). In order to carry out this class war, the Republicans have to create the illusion that it is actually not happening. Instead they have promoted ideas that suggest that the various means through which the wealth created by working people ends up in the hands of the super-rich is the normal course of events and is a path open to us all. But it does not work that way. You and I are not getting any richer. Instead we are watching our futures vanish as the super-rich take more and more of everything that we have built.

Regardless of what you may think about the Obama presidency, don't be hoodwinked into believing that he is advocating class war. He is actually advocating fairness, and the last time I checked, that was supposed to be a noble virtue.

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