

THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Written by Calvin Fox

Tuesday, 11 November 2014 08:58 - Last Updated Tuesday, 11 November 2014 09:00

The Bible says "THOU SHALT NOT STEAL". Conservative, libertarian and neoliberal arguments against property redistribution consider the term a euphemism for theft or forced labor, and argue that redistribution of legitimately obtained property cannot ever be just.

Public programs and policy measures involving redistribution of property include

- progressive income tax system, a high income earner will pay a higher tax rate than a low income earner.
- eminent domain,
- land reform, Land reform (also agrarian reform) involves the changing of laws, regulations or customs regarding land ownership. Land reform may consist of a government-initiated or government-backed property redistribution, generally of agricultural land.
- inheritance tax
- certain provisions found in family law. eg- divorce, annulment, property settlements, alimony, child custody and visitation, child support and alimony awards.
- "transfer payment" programs funded through general taxation eg- subsidies and vouchers (such as food stamps) transfer is made without any exchange of goods or services. Examples include welfare (financial aid), social security, and government subsidies for certain businesses (firms).

THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Written by Calvin Fox

Tuesday, 11 November 2014 08:58 - Last Updated Tuesday, 11 November 2014 09:00

Property redistribution is a term applied to various policies involving taxation or nationalization of property, or of regulations ordering owners to make their property available to others.

In the United States, some of the founding fathers and several subsequent leaders expressed opposition to redistribution of wealth . During his own attempt to make a case for helping French refugees from the Haitian Revolution, James Madison, author of the Constitution, wrote, "I cannot undertake to lay my finger on that article of the Constitution which granted a right to Congress of expending, on objects of benevolence, the money of their constituents."

United States President Grover Cleveland vetoed an expenditure of federal aid explaining,

I can find no warrant for such an appropriation in the Constitution; and I do not believe that the power and duty of the General Government ought to be extended to the relief of individual suffering which is in no manner properly related to the public service or benefit. A prevalent tendency to disregard the limited mission of this power and duty should, I think, be steadily resisted ... The friendliness and charity of our fellow countrymen can always be relied on to relieve their fellow citizens in misfortune. Federal aid in such cases encourages the expectation of paternal care on the part of the Government and weakens the sturdiness of our national character, while it prevents the indulgence among our people of that kindly sentiment and conduct which strengthens the bonds of a common brotherhood

Does the Bible address this Issue? It does not advocate the involuntary redistribution of wealth by the Government from some citizens to others. See my Essays on Economics on this website.