



AP FILE

President Ronald Reagan's economic policies couldn't be more different than President Barack Obama's.

COMMENTARY

washingtonexaminer.com

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2009

# Not till the fat lady sings

**“W**e’ve almost two years yet to go, and the show ain’t over until the fat lady sings,” President Ronald Reagan said to applause six years to the day from the 1981 assassination attempt that nearly killed him.

“I won’t even let her whistle.” Then, as now, liberals gleefully whistled past conservative Republicans’ would-be graveyard.

Reagan was having none of it. “We’re going to have the greatest fourth quarter in presidential history,” he predicted.

The first presidential quarter of Barack Obama’s administration couldn’t be more different.

Candidly, neither do the tax-day “Tea Parties” exactly resemble the Reagan Revolution.

That revolution was catalyzed by California’s Proposition 13, limiting property taxes to 1 percent, effectively channeling anger against liberal big spenders and catapulting Reagan to the White House.

As Karl Rove wrote in the Wall Street Journal: “To tap into that [pro-growth, low-tax] constituency, Republicans will have to link lower taxes to money in voters’ pockets, and economic growth and jobs. They must explain why the GOP approach will lead to greater prosperity. Such arguments are not self-executing. They require leaders to make them, time and again, as Reagan once did.”

Yet, liberal disdain from the likes of Paul Krugman is way premature.

“Republicans,” he wrote in “Tea Parties, Forever” in the New York Times on April 13, “have become embarrassing to watch. And it doesn’t feel right to make fun of crazy people. Better, perhaps, to

*But, maybe — if we’re lucky — we’ll have an attack of heart. That is, sympathy for hardworking Americans who lose so much of what they earn to inefficient, impersonal government.*

focus on the real policy debates, which are all among Democrats.”

That is, among “Strawberry Fields Forever” Democrats who seem to think the Federal Reserve can print a limitless supply of money to backstop our ballooning trillion-dollar-plus deficit.

How quaint Reagan’s budgetary battles seem.

“To begin with,” Reagan said at that 1987 gathering, “you might have noticed that lately there’s been a little trouble with the way the big spenders in Congress have been handling the budget. I have to admit, legislation like the \$88 billion boondoggle of a highway bill sort of gives me a case of heartburn.”

Today, he’d have to say heart attack.

But, maybe — if we’re lucky — we’ll have an attack of heart. That is, sympathy for hardworking Americans who lose so much

of what they earn to inefficient, impersonal government. Government that, a friend reported from the Lafayette Park Tea Party, “herded [protesters] around ... and for the first time in my life, I felt like someone being pursued by the SS. No kidding.”

Your tax dollars at work! Treating Americans with a right to protest like they are threats to national security — when all they were trying to say is the real threat emanates from the guy sitting across the street in the Oval Office, utterly clueless — or worse, heedless — that his profligate spending is placing America on a fiscal collision course, and, for all his romanticized rhetoric, read straight from the teleprompter, the reality is not pretty.

While Republicans cast about for the next Reagan, here’s a suggestion: On July 4, when Tea Partiers meet again, instead of fooling around with tea bags, set up a screen in Lafayette Park and show classic speeches, e.g., the 1924 film of President Calvin Coolidge — the first filmed presidential address — explaining, right across the street — without teleprompter — that keeping taxes low is the essence of freedom. (youtube.com/watch?v=5puwTrLRhmw)

Meantime, liberals such as Krugman, despising those seemingly inept, ugly, fat Republicans with nothing “real” to contribute, should keep handy a recording of Susan Boyle singing “I Dreamed a Dream” on “Britain’s Got Talent 2009”! (youtube.com/watch?v=9lp0IWv8QZY).

Mary Claire Kendall, a writer and commentator, has extensive political experience, including a stint as one of Lee Atwater’s “30 nerds.”