



## **A Familiar Echo?**

Friday, September 21, 2012

Robert F. Lyons, Kennebunkport, Maine

**I**n “Demographic Doom for the GOP” (Press & Dakotan, Sept. 19), Robert Reich asks the question: “How can this be.... the Romney-Ryan ticket is falling further and further behind?”

**Surely, a primary reason that the Romney-Ryan ticket is failing is the latest display of presidential candidate Mitt Romney’s disdain for the 47 percent of American citizens who “are dependent upon government ... for food, housing, you-name-it.” This sounds remarkably similar to the words and policy of Charles Trevelyan, British Relief administrator, who during the Irish Famine of the 1840s warned of the need to eliminate “the canker of state dependency” manifest in the tendency of all Irish classes to “make a poor mouth.”**

**Romney’s economic theory is based on the same laissez-faire principles of economics that guided Trevelyan to claim that aiding the starving and homeless Irish brought “the risk of paralyzing all private enterprise.” The British government closed the soup kitchens and food depots in Ireland in the belief that the free market would reduce the people’s dependence on the government while at the same time maintaining the rights of private enterprise.**

**We know too well the consequences of the class warfare between the haves and the have-nots from that painful chapter of history. I am a descendant of one of the millions of families who were forced to flee Ireland where the policy of the free trade warriors, by emigration and death, successfully removed millions from “the canker of state dependency.”**