

The Liberal Mind vs. the Conservative Mind



Send him mail.

"Food for Thought" is an original column appearing every other Tuesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Norman Imberman. Norman is a retired podiatrist who loves playing piano, writing music, lawn bowling, bridge, reading, classical music, going to movies, plays, concerts and traveling. He is not a member of any social network, nor does he plan on becoming one. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FFT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Dear Reader: Below is an actual reconstructed email dialogue between a liberal acquaintance and I. At first I had decided to end the dialogue with the absurdity he had presented in the middle of this discussion but it kept gnawing at me over the next few days until I could not resist a final response and I could not resist creating this article for further analysis. I shall call the liberal, Joe. He is a male in his mid-eighties in full possession of his faculties. "The Mind of a Conservative" follows at the end of this presentation.

The Mind of a Liberal

Dear Joe:

Attached is one of the best articles I have read about governments in general, written by John Pugsley, an astute economist. It is a dispassionate review of the history of governments. It does not make fun of anyone or any system. It does not insult and does not intimidate. It does have a bias toward freedom but I imagine that we all want to be free. Your comments would be welcome.

Note to the reader: The article that I emailed to Joe is called "The Welfare State: A Failed Experiment". It is too long to include it in its entirety and can be found [here](#). What follows is a long quote from it that I emailed to Joe.

"Here is a thought-provoking hypothetical situation which I first heard when it was used by instructor Jay Snelson in course 'V-50' given by the Free Enterprise Institute in Los Angeles, California. Imagine that you own a nice television set. I live across the street, and one night I knock on your door, tell you that I don't have a TV, explain why I desperately need yours and ask you to give it to me. You ponder my request and even feel some compassion for my plight. But you turn me down. I leave. Later, after you've gone to bed, I sneak in your back door and take the television. I assume that you would call this an act of theft. After

all, that is how we define theft—taking someone’s property without his consent. Now, think carefully: Are there any extenuating circumstances that would cause my act of taking your TV set not to be theft? For example, suppose that when I first knocked on your door I had explained that I was hungry, and hadn’t eaten in three days, and needed to sell the set to get money for food. Would my need for food have meant that my taking the set was no longer an act of theft? Or would it still be stealing? Or, suppose that when I first met you I had told you that my daughter was ill, and I needed to sell the set to get the money for medicine to save her life. Under these circumstances, if you refused me and I took the set without your consent, is it no longer theft? Or would it still be stealing? Or, suppose that after you had refused me I had walked next door and talked to your neighbors on each side. I explained my need and told them that you had refused to give the TV to me. They both told me to take the set. If I have the permission of two of your neighbors, would it no longer be theft? Or would it still be stealing? What if I had talked with everyone in town, and with only one exception (guess who) everyone in town had agreed that I should take your TV? Would it still be stealing? What if I had asked everyone in the whole country if I should take your set, and again (with the exception of you) absolutely everyone had agreed I should take the set? Would it still be stealing? Would it change things if instead of selling the set after I took it, I set it up in the local park and invited everyone in town, including you, to watch it? If you were given equal opportunity to use the set along with everyone else, would this mean my act of taking the set was no longer stealing? By now I’m sure you’ve seen the point of the story. Theft is the act of taking something that belongs to someone else without that person’s voluntary consent. It doesn’t matter what the thief’s “need” may be, it is still theft. It doesn’t matter how many other people give a thief permission to take your property, if he takes it without your permission, he is stealing. It doesn’t matter if the property is available to all, including you. It is still theft.

“If you agree that taking property from someone without that person’s voluntary consent is theft, regardless of the need and regardless of how many people agree that it should be taken, then you must acknowledge that when the government takes anything from a person without that person’s consent, it is stealing. Involuntary taxation is theft. Of course, voluntary taxation is not taxation at all. Perhaps you voluntarily pay taxes. Most people don’t. Thus, the welfare state, a situation in which the state takes from some to provide for the needs of others, is founded on theft.”

Sincerely, Norm

Dear Norm:

John Pugsley uses specious logic and manufactures “facts” to present his argument. Declaring that taxation is theft does not pass the test for truth. A system of taxes has been approved by a majority of the population. (There certainly are many bad choices made on how taxes are redistributed, but that is not the question.) Mr. Pugsley can’t see beyond

roads and bridges.

Sincerely, Joe

Dear Reader: Note: Pugsley did not “declare” that taxation is theft he proved it. I then emailed Joe an article that I had written in 1998 called “The Handshake and the Club,” in which I drew a picture of a man with each arm outstretched and a pointer coming from his right hand pointing to a hand in a handshake position with another hand, while the left hand is pointing to a club. The handshake represents voluntary exchange while the club represents coercion. Man has used both methods in the course of history to get the things that he desired. I pointed out how the handshake has led to progress and harmony while the club has led to discord, war, famine and mass murder. His response lies next.

Dear Norm:

I bid 2 clubs.

Sincerely, Joe

(I guess he thought he was being funny so I then emailed him my further thoughts on the matter).

Dear Joe:

It is so baffling and frustrating how John Pugsley makes such an irrefutable case for the fact that our entire social structure is based upon theft and coercion, how it is immoral and wrong, and how it leads to the exact antithesis of what we all want for ourselves, family, friends and country, and yet you don't see it. One of the reasons is because you honestly believe that the present state of our chaotic situation is because of capitalism and the free market and I understand that. You do not see that capitalism as it has existed in our country is *not* a free market. It has always been a government-run, government-controlled operation, which makes it socialism and fascism. You do not see that government interference with freedom has been the cause of our problems. Therefore, you don't trust freedom and you desire the vote to determine which citizens will be attacked, plundered, murdered, coerced and held in bondage. You know you will not get all of the “good” coercion that you desire through the vote but are willing to put up with the “bad” coercion by the “other voters” as a compromise. You have been taught in our State-run schools that compromise is the road to peace and harmony. After all you must believe that you have to break an egg in order to make an omelet.

I also cannot understand how John Pugsley went through all of the steps of demonstrating the variations of theft – starting with a one-on-one act of theft and proceeding to all of the other examples of the very same acts but on a larger scale *and* it resulted in the fact that

you don't agree. At what point in his discussion is it not theft? Go back and look at his examples and tell me at which step it is not theft. Or are you of the opinion that it is theft in all the examples but you believe in "good theft"? I am able to understand that you believe in "good theft" better than I can understand that you believe that it is no longer theft somewhere along the road in his examples. Be specific and tell me why it is no longer theft at that point. The point of defining one's terms is not only to communicate. It is really to be able to know what one is talking about and impart the idea to others. Definitions, in a consistent manner are very important in order for one to formulate ideas.

You know, as an engineer, that every structure must be built upon sound basic principles before it can be built and those principles cannot be violated in order for the mechanism to work successfully. Please let me know your list of basic principles upon which your social mechanism will work successfully. I know you are a kind and well-meaning person. Therefore, you want to see a society that functions well. There must be some idea of those principles in the back of your mind, which you probably haven't given much thought to in the past since no person has come along and given you this mental exercise like I am doing now. Demonstrate how those principles will bring peace and harmony to your society. It might be an interesting endeavor for you, just to solidify your own belief system. Let me know even one of those basic principles. I would appreciate it. It would give me some insight into the mental process of the Liberal Mind. Realize that your principles cannot violate the principles of Human Nature or they will fail.

Sincerely, Norm

Dear reader: Below is his "Principle." However, he failed to respond to my question: "at what point in Pugsley's discussion is it not theft?"

Dear Norm:

Joe's Principle: "When the majority of the tribe agrees that taxation is the best handshake it cannot be called a club or a theft."

P.S: Stop already, my head hurts.

Sincerely, Joe

Dear reader: I then intended to stop as he requested above. However, Joe then emailed me an article written in the New York Times "proving" how Ronald Reagan's policies have helped destroy this country. I have not reproduced the article here. Here was my response.

Dear Joe:

Why did you send me this article? Do you think that I am a Reagan lover? Although he was

the least destructive president we had since Thomas Jefferson, his basic ideology is just as destructive to establishing peace, harmony and security as any politician. It is evident that you have not understood the point that John Pugsley was making or my own presentation. I guess we failed to portray a clear picture of it and I am sorry for that result. The opportunity has passed. Thanks for your interest. At least you read the two articles and I thank you for that.

Sincerely, Norm

Dear reader: With Joe's last response I had decided to drop the communication. Over the next few days it kept coming to mind to the point that I was compelled to send one last response, written below. At this point I knew that I would not be able to win a friend or influence him in any way so I entered the fray with both barrels firing.

Dear Joe:

You wrote, "When the majority of the tribe agrees that taxation is the best handshake it cannot be called a club or a theft."

I understand how your head hurts but I could not resist asking you the following question based upon your belief quoted above. It is at this point that I feel compelled to be a bit harsh with you. Please try to forgive me for my harshness.

To follow your line of reasoning, "if the majority of the tribe agrees that" murdering Jews is the best handshake in order to solve the tribe's problems, "it cannot be called a club or a murder."

What a perversion of reality! What a perversion of reason! What intellectual dishonesty! I am sure that even the Nazis understood that they were committing murder, theft and rape when they perpetrated those atrocities against the Jews, Gypsies, and Catholics. What do you think?

Sincerely, Norm

Dear Reader: I didn't expect an answer from Joe but it is at this point that an entire article can be written about the mind of a liberal. Michael Savage, who is not one of my favorite talk-show hosts, but has many correct things to say, has often said "liberalism is a mental disease." It is funny but unfortunately it is seriously and devastatingly true. Joe's "principle" at the end is typical of how the liberal "thinks." He fakes reality. He perverts language. He perverts reason. He abrogates his own mind. When there is a disconnect between reality and one's own mind, the only method one can use to "think" is to rely upon one's whims, wishes, hopes, mental gymnastics, and prayers. I believe there is a book called The Mind of the Liberal, which I have not read. Joe's last statement, ("when the

majority of the tribe agrees that taxation is the best handshake it cannot be called a club or a theft”), tells the entire story. An entire book is not necessary. People come down hard upon Ayn Rand when she labels such “thinkers” as whim-worshipping mystics. But she is correct as evidenced by my dialogue with Joe. Orwell’s 1984 is upon us. Newspeak and doublespeak is here.

Wonder of wonders, Joe just emailed me his response to my last email to him.

Dear Norm:

If a tribe selects murder it is still a handshake (voluntary) and not a club (coercion) by your definition.

Other tribes may view that tribe as a danger to its own wellbeing and may seek to overthrow it. It’s in the history books, both recent and past.

Sincerely, Joe

Dear reader: Once again, he offered another nonsense response. Case closed even though I was tempted to respond to him as follows, “just ask the people who were murdered if it was voluntary. I’ll bet you’re glad that you didn’t live in Nazi Germany in the 1940s.”

In the past, every liberal with whom I have had discussions of this nature, has utilized the same sophistry in one form or another.

The Mind of a Conservative

“Republicans are usually worse than Democrats when it comes to freedom, partly because they like to couch their depredations in the rhetoric of defending the free market. While everyone understands that Democrats are socialists just under the surface, Republicans actually give capitalism a bad name.” – Doug Casey

Yesterday, while sitting as a passenger in my friend’s automobile, he brought up a subject of a political nature. He bemoaned the fact that the liberals are trying to destroy our liberty. My friend is a staunch conservative and is very serious about his belief in conservative issues and the Constitution. Since he brought up a political subject I decided to ask him if he ever thought about the proper function of government. He admitted he didn’t. So I asked him to tell me what he thought the proper function of government is. He said the role is in foreign policy and protection of America from foreign aggression. He stopped there and failed to furnish me with any other functions, as if he was finished. So I asked, “what about protection from domestic aggression through the use of a police force?” He agreed. After a few seconds he added, “the establishment of a system of courts to maintain justice, the building and maintenance of national parks, roads and bridges.” I

then added the following list of government functions, *to which he agreed*: regulation of standards for the agriculture, manufacturing, commercial, educational and housing industries, printing of money, control of money through the Federal Reserve System, regulation of wages and prices and the assistance to the needy through a welfare system. I asked him if he realizes that those are the same responses that I get when I have a conversation with a liberal. He smiled and said, "it's a matter of 'reasonableness.'" I didn't bother to ask him to define "reasonableness."

Without arguing with him I then proceeded to present him with the very same thought-provoking situation that is presented in the fourth paragraph of this article, that I had submitted to Joe the liberal where various examples of theft are presented. His response was the exact response that was given to me by Joe, the liberal. He admitted that theft is the taking of property of another without his permission and that taxation is the taking of another's property without his permission but taxation is not theft because it's in the Constitution, and therefore it is legal and therefore right. In other words, just like Joe had said, "if a tribe selects murder it is still a handshake (voluntary) and not a club (coercion)." It amazed me how the exact same, almost word for word, argument to sanction and condone theft was used by both the liberal and the conservative. To both of them, if the majority or the Constitution says that the taking of another's property is not theft, then, it is not theft.

This is a succinct example of the fact that there is no difference between Liberalism and Conservatism. To say that it is only a matter of degree, although true, obfuscates the issue. The recognition of contradictions in their thinking has no place. In principle, Conservatism is simply right-wing communo-fascism while Liberalism is left-wing communo-fascism. The Left, with religious dogmatic fervor and belief in the ideology from their "good book," the *Communist Manifesto*, won't budge from their position, while the Right, with the same religious dogmatic fervor won't budge from their belief in their "good books," the *Bible* and/or the Constitution. Their minds are devoid of the basic principles of efficient thinking, which is, in reality, a mental disease.