



## Liberal Greed: Barack Obama and the Real One Percent

Forget Mitt Romney and Bain Capital. If you want to find the real greedy one percent, you need look no further than Barack Obama. According to tax returns released yesterday, Barack and Michelle Obama earned \$1.2 million from 2000 through 2004 yet managed no more than \$10,772 in charitable donations. This amounts to less than one percent of their income. Upon becoming public figures, there was hope and some (spare) change, as they did a lot better in earning and a little better in giving. In 2005 and 2006, they donated \$137,622, which was just over 5 percent of the \$2.6 million that free enterprise distributed their way.



In contrast, Romney appears the Santa Claus to Obama's Scrooge. According to the former Massachusetts Governor's tax returns, he donated almost \$3 million to charity in 2010, just under 14 percent of his \$21.7 million income; he did even better in 2011, donating \$4 million to charity — almost 20 percent of his \$20.9 million income.

In other words, while Obama talks a good game about redistributing wealth, he seems to want his to stay right where it is.

This may make some wonder if the President has, at least relative to Romney, short arms and deep pockets. If he does, however, he probably doesn't realize it given the company he's keeping. It's like that old advice, if you want to look thin, hang around fatter people. Well, among the President's leftist brethren, penny dancing is par for the course.

While the left often preaches about helping the downtrodden and scolds the right for being greedy, when the matter is one's own money, liberals are conservative while conservatives are liberal. As George Will wrote in 2008 when reporting on a Syracuse University study:

✘ Although liberal families' incomes average 6 percent higher than those of conservative families, conservative-headed households give, on average, 30 percent more to charity than the average liberal-headed household (\$1,600 per year vs. \$1,227).

Conservatives also donate more time and give more blood.

Residents of the states that voted for John Kerry in 2004 gave smaller percentages of their incomes to charity than did residents of states that voted for George Bush.

... In the 10 reddest states, in which Bush got more than 60 percent majorities, the average percentage of personal income donated to charity was 3.5. Residents of the bluest states, which gave Bush less than 40 percent, donated just 1.9 percent.

People who reject the idea that "government has a responsibility to reduce income inequality" give an average of *four times more* than people who accept that proposition.



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 25, 2012

And the picture looks worst among those who preach income redistribution most: liberal politicians. Reported Peter Schweizer in *The American Spectator* in 2008:

[New York governor Andrew Cuomo] was a homeless advocate throughout the 1990s, but according to his own tax returns he made no charitable contributions between 1996 and 1999. In 2000 he donated a whopping \$2,750. In 2004 and 2005, Cuomo had more than \$1.5 million in adjusted gross income but gave a paltry \$2,000 to charity.

Cuomo made **no** charitable contributions in 2003, when his income was a bit less than \$300,000. [Emphasis in original.]

The Cuomos sure know how to redistribute others' income, though. When Andrew's father Mario was Governor, he once raised taxes \$1 billion annually for three consecutive years and proposed levying a tax on newborns. And, Schweizer points out, joining Cuomo in the Statist Penny-dancing Hall of Shame are:

- Al Gore — gave \$353 to charity in 1998 (John Edwards spends more than that on a haircut).
- Senator John Kerry — he found \$500,000 in 1995 to buy a share in a prized painting but gave \$0 to charity.
- Secretary of Labor under Bill Clinton Robert Reich - while he unabashedly peddles the greedy-conservative meme, it seemed like projection when he was forced to release his 2002 tax return during a Massachusetts gubernatorial run. Out of an income exceeding \$1 million, Reich donated only \$2,714 — .2 percent.
- Race hustler and corporate shake-down artist Jesse Jackson — his tax returns showed that he did five times as well as Reich, donating one percent of his income to charity.
- Senator Ted Kennedy — it may be fitting that *Nation* board member Norman Birnbaum called the late Mass. Senator the “conscience” of progressivism. After all, when the multi-millionaire had to release some of his tax returns in the ‘70s during a presidential run, it was found that he was a one-percenter as well. In all fairness, though, he did all he could during his 46-year Senate career to redistribute as much of your tax money as possible.
- Franklin Roosevelt — had an income of \$1.3 million in inflation-adjusted dollars, but during the darkest days of the Great Depression donated just two percent of it to charity. And this is the guy who gave us the 93-percent tax rate. Much to his dismay, however, it was applied only to income over \$200,000. What FDR really wanted was a 100-percent marginal rate ensuring, socialist style, that no American would have an after-tax income of more than \$25,000 a year.

If you think these are anomalies, know that research also shows that the left is selfish, greedy, and self-absorbed. Writing in another 2008 article, Schweizer reported that, by wide margins, liberals are less likely than conservatives to believe that it's their “obligation to care for a seriously injured/ill spouse or parent,” that you “get happiness by putting someone else's happiness ahead of your own,” or that “parents should sacrifice their own well-being for those [sic] of their children....” Even more to the point here, studies also show that it is liberals who are money-oriented. Writes Schweizer, “Left-wingers are more likely to rate ‘high income’ as an important factor in choosing a job, more likely to say ‘after good health, money is the most important thing’, and agree with the statement ‘there are no right or wrong ways to make money’.” Schweizer continues:

Professor James Lindgren, of Northwestern University in Chicago, found those who favour the



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redistribution of wealth are more envious than those who do not.

Scholars at Oxford and Warwick Universities found the same sort of behaviour when they conducted an experiment.

Setting up a computer game that allowed people to accumulate money, they gave participants the option to spend some of their own money in order to take away more from someone else.

The result? Those who considered themselves 'egalitarians' (i.e. Left of centre) were much more willing to give up some of their own money if it meant taking more money from someone else.

Now maybe we know why Winston Churchill called socialism "the gospel of envy."

As for charity, there is a kicker there, too: On the blue-moon occasions when liberals do donate money, they rarely help the poor. Instead, they usually give to political causes.

None of this comes as a surprise to me, as I learned long ago that liberalism isn't an ideology as much as just an expression of the collective feelings *du jour* of dysfunctional people. Whenever liberals accuse traditionalists of something — greed, "racism," etc. — it's a good bet they are simply projecting. They expect others to be vice-ridden because they are themselves.

And because they don't want to relinquish their vices, they outsource their atonement. This reminds me of a man I once knew who was a sexual harasser of women and who, when contemplating what politician to support, expressed an affinity for the feminist agenda. It reminds me of his sexually harassing brethren Bill Clinton and former Senator Bob Packwood — they, too, had the same affinity. Is it any surprise? They forestall guilt and justify their behavior by substituting ostensible societal improvement for self-improvement. Liberals don't actually have to treat women well in their personal lives; they support feminism. They don't actually have to be good to their fellow man; they support hate-crime statutes and anti-discrimination laws. And they don't actually have to help poor people they may meet. They advocate big-government programs.

It's well known that liberals expect the state to do for people what they should do for themselves. But this goes beyond typical worldly needs such as health care, food, and housing. Liberals also want the government to cultivate the good in society that they refuse to cultivate in themselves.



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