

Liberals Literally Think Conservatives Belong in a Mental Institution

During the reign of Communist oppression in the late and unlamented Soviet Union, dissenters routinely were put in mental hospitals. Whether human rights activists or religious believers, thousands of men and women were shoved into psychiatric facilities, where they were treated with heavy doses of drugs in order to render them innocuous to the Marxists in the Kremlin.

As described by University of Virginia law professor Richard J. Bonnie, psychiatric abuse is “the deployment of medicine as an instrument of repression” and was extensive in the Soviet regime: “When the Soviet Union was defending its suppression of political and religious dissent, it steadfastly denied allegations of psychiatric repression—allegations that have now been well documented and are no longer contested by the psychiatric leadership in Russia and other post-Soviet states.”

There are reports that Vladimir Putin is reinvigorating this cruel system, so it’s worrisome when people in the U.S. make light of such an idea being implemented here or even seem to condone it.

Most recently, aging “bad boy” actor Sean Penn, in response to a question about the recent partial shutdown of the government, said in an interview with Piers Morgan that there should be psychiatric treatment of conservatives in Congress.

As reported by CNN, Penn said, “I think there’s a mental health problem in Congress. This would be solved by committing them by executive order.”

Slightly shocked by the comment, Morgan sought clarification. "You literally commit what? People like Ted Cruz?" he asked.

Describing Cruz as his American brother, the star of *Milk* and *Mystic River* insisted the Texas senator needs professional help. "I think we should take care of him," Penn said.

A U.S. president, by executive order, assigning his political opponents to mental asylums? Perhaps Penn was speaking tongue-in-cheek, but his visage during the exchange is quite serious. And perhaps he is unfamiliar with the meaning of debate in a system of representative self-government.

Such a lack of familiarity also indicates a rather primitive or even nonexistent understanding of the right to dissent, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and human dignity we tend to take for granted as our American birthrights. Penn's proposal smacks of nothing so much as fascism.

Sadly, Penn is not alone.

University of Scranton psychology professor Barry Kuhle argues that "signs of psychopathology can ... be seen among ... conservative politicians, especially when you consider a wide range of illness indicators."

Professor Nancy Meyer-Emerick of Cleveland State University has developed a "right wing authoritarian" (RWA) test to see if a person manifests what she views as authoritarian tendencies; unsurprisingly, "Republicans cluster at the high end of the RWA scale whereas Democrats range across the scale."

And consider this "research" from four university professors in the *Psychological Bulletin* of the American Psychological Association: "The core ideology of conservatism stresses resistance to change and justification of inequality and is motivated by needs that vary situationally and dispositionally

to manage uncertainty and threat. We regard political conservatism as an ideological belief system that is significantly (but not completely) related to motivational concerns having to do with the psychological management of uncertainty and fear.”

Commenting in 2008, Pacific University psychology professor W.T. Schultz summarized the left’s grasp of conservatism quite neatly: “While watching the stupendously ruthless Republican National Convention over the last several days. Is there anything that conservatives do not hate?”

Conservatives have long argued that the Left is so confident in what it sees as the self-evident wisdom of its own beliefs and proposals that liberalism/progressivism is stunned when seemingly intelligent, articulate people disagree with it.

To borrow Thomas Sowell’s memorable phrase, “the vision of the anointed” precludes dissent or even disagreement. Revealed leftist truth—e.g., the more government, the better; the higher taxes are, the most just society is; the more radically autonomous the individual is, the freer a people become—cannot be denied or questioned, and those who challenge it are psychopathic.

In addition to being ridiculous, such a perspective is just so intellectually lazy. Portraying one’s philosophical and political opponents as mentally ill allows one to dismiss their arguments and ideas and go forward toward the bright future, the veritable “worker’s paradise,” that is the shimmering mirage of liberalism’s promise.

Woodrow Wilson, a proud “progressive,” is quoted as saying, “I am sorry for those who disagree with me because I know they are wrong.”

Mr. Penn, meet President Wilson.

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Council. This article appeared in The Blaze Monday.