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## Morality and Taxes

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by [NewsReal Blog](#)

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At the CATO Institute's website, [Richard W. Rahn makes the excellent point](#) that, while it is absolutely necessary to pay taxes in a civilized society, tax laws not only have to be functional but also moral. And, I'm sad to say, some of today's laws are anything but:

The county tax collector who is responsible for the collection of property taxes is engaged in a necessary activity because it is through his or her efforts that the local police, fire departments and schools are funded. In most places, all pay the same tax rate, with those having more expensive properties paying proportionally more and vice versa. The tax, and how it is applied, is readily understood by most people. Even though many may complain about the tax rate, the tax itself is generally considered fair...

Unlike the local property and sales taxes, the federal income tax and the IRS have perverted the law, which is supposed to ensure equal justice, into an instrument of plunder through legislation (as contrasted with constitutional law) and regulation. The Constitution gives the federal government the right to tax for the "common Defense" and "general [not specific] welfare" (e.g., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Many of the current departments of government (e.g., the Departments of Housing, Energy, Education and Health and Human Services) seem to have no constitutional basis, and nowhere does the Constitution give the federal government the power to engage in income redistribution.

Leftists often like to pretend that conservatives and libertarians oppose *all* taxes. Although that makes for a handy talking point for them, it couldn't be further from the truth. There are some taxes we have to pay. If we refuse, society will collapse. It's that simple.

However, our quarrel is with the many other taxes levied by the government. Unlike the necessary ones listed by Rahn, these taxes serve to redistribute wealth and to remake society, not to provide us with the necessary infrastructure we need to take care of ourselves and our families. Taxes should serve to pay for creating the

circumstances in which we can all blossom - if we choose to. They are not meant, or they should not be meant, to accomplish more.

At the very moment opportunistic and careless politicians ignore the above, the law ceases to be moral. And that, although most contemporary politicians seem unable to comprehend it, is a problem. As Frederic Bastiat correctly said, "No society can exist unless the laws are respected to a certain degree, but the safest way to make them respected is to make them respectable. When law and morality are in contradiction to each other, the citizen finds himself in the cruel alternative of either losing his moral sense, or of losing his respect for the law."



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