



Everything Jersey

## Rush Limbaugh, left-wing lunatic

By Paul Mulshine/The Star Ledger

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As I've made plain in my prior posts, nothing bothers me more than the attempt by various talk-radio types to denounce the idea of elitism. There is a big advantage to elites: They know what they're talking about.

Meanwhile those who rail against them often don't. Perhaps the best recent example was the way in which Rush Limbaugh mounted what he thought was a conservative attack on Barack Obama over the issue of negative rights.

It was embarrassing. When I first heard Limbaugh discussing the issue on the radio, I thought perhaps I wasn't hearing correctly. Here is a man who pretends to speak for conservatives on the question of constitutional rights. And here was a man who was revealing himself as a complete ignoramus on the issue.

Since the time of John Locke, it has been a core tenet of conservative thought that rights are restrictions on government. My right to carry a gun means simply that the government can't take my gun away. That's a negative right.

If the government were required by law to buy me a gun, that would be a positive right. Obvious, no? To you and me perhaps. But it went way over Limbaugh's head.

He was reacting to a tape that surfaced recently of Barack Obama discussing the nature of rights in 2001. At points in the tape, Obama seemed to be endorsing the redistribution of wealth. That's another issue, however, and one into which I shall not go here - and you shall not either in the comments or your post will receive a "Moron Perspective Alert."

What I'm focusing on here is how Limbaugh totally misconstrued Obama's interpretation of the rights in the constitution as negative.

Here is how **Limbaugh reacted** to Obama's statement:

"There is an entire legal movement that is referring to the Constitution as a charter of negative rights, a charter of negative rights. To them, negative rights are that the government can't do enough. It's negative because the government is limited. Why change the name? Why doesn't Obama say the Bill of Rights is too limiting?"

Now this is just plain ignorant. As I noted above, the "movement" in question started with the modern idea of rights, i.e. with Locke. Anyone with even the

most cursory knowledge of the constitution knows that it is conservatives, not liberals, who insist constitutional rights are negative.

Tibor R. Machan gives an excellent explanation in **this essay**:

"Natural rights -- or, as they have been un-euphoniously dubbed, 'negative rights' -- pertain to freedom from the uninvited interventions of others. Respect for negative rights requires merely that we abstain from pushing one another around. Positive rights, by contrast, require that we be provided with goods or services at the expense of other persons, which can only be accomplished by systematic coercion. This idea is also known as the doctrine of entitlements; that is, some people are said to be entitled to that which is earned by other people.

""Positive rights' trump freedom. According to this doctrine, human beings by nature owe, as a matter of enforceable obligation, part or even all of their lives to other persons. Generosity and charity thus cannot be left to individual conscience. If people have such positive rights, no one can be justified in refusing service to others; one may be conscripted to serve regardless of one's own choices and goals."

This is obvious to all conservatives. But listen again to Limbaugh:

"A charter of negative rights is demeaning and a deliberate attempt to destroy the Bill of Rights. That's what Obama wants."

Yikes! This may be the single dumbest remark I've ever heard on radio. If Obama were indeed a strict supporter of the idea of negative rights, then he would be a conservative and a strict constructionist.

He's not, but for reasons that Limbaugh could not begin to comprehend.

Anyway, it's the left wing that is always busy creating positive rights, i.e. the right to housing, health care and so on.

We right-wingers can't even discuss positive "rights" without putting the word "rights" in quotes to show our skepticism that such a concept could even exist.

Rights are negative, period.

Limbaugh gets that wrong, too,

"You take away an individual's right to bear arms, is Anti-Bill of Rights, but to Obama that's a positive right, a positive right granted to the government."

No, it's not. What Limbaugh is describing is not a positive right by anyone's definition, conservative or liberal. As I noted, a positive "right" in the area of guns would mean the government would have to buy you one.

What Limbaugh is referring to is not a right at all, but a power of government. And rights are negations of such powers.

Again, this is obvious. Anyone who fails to grasp it is incapable of comprehending the very nature of conservative thought.

In opposing the negative idea of rights, Limbaugh is lining up with the leftists.

Here's how Machan describes the Marxists and other collectivists who perverted the Lockean view of rights:

"Riding on purloined prestige, they perverted the concept of individual rights at its root so that it came to mean not liberty from others but service from others. Who needs the right to pursue happiness when one has the right to be made happy (even if the thus-extracted "happiness" should render the indentured providers of it miserable)?"

When it comes to Limbaugh, I believe this left-wing stance is not merely a result of ignorance. Even an ignorant person, if conservative by nature, would instinctively realize that the idea of negative rights is conservative and positive "rights" liberal.

So this was a bit of a Rorschach test of Limbaugh's conservatism. And he failed, as would most of his listeners. He and they are by nature collectivists, herd animals who fear any deviation from the herd's norms. But this is hardly an insight. After all, they call themselves "ditto-heads."

How can someone who claims to be a conservative not be aware of such obvious points?

Because Limbaugh's not a conservative. He's an entertainer. And a lot of people are entertained by this stuff. But those people are no more conservative than Limbaugh is. They're just people who are easily entertained.

If you are such a person, please read the attached essay so you will have an understanding of rights totally absent in your mentor. If not, you risk a Moron Perspective Alert, though in this instance I may term it a Dittohead Alert. Same thing.

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