

## Joe Pesci on Liberalitarianism

Submitted by Conn Carroll on Fri, 07/24/2009 - 12:42

George Mason Associate Professor of Economics Bryan Caplan made his first trip to one of Brink Lindsey's **Liberalitarian Roundtable** ([http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=6800](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6800)) dinners and writes at **EconLog** ([http://econlog.econlib.org/archives/2009/07/what\\_i\\_told\\_the.html](http://econlog.econlib.org/archives/2009/07/what_i_told_the.html)):

In any case, it is silly for liberals and libertarians to sit around offering each other "deals." Even ignoring the mistrust, there's a more fundamental problem: Neither of us can deliver what we're "offering." What does it even mean for me to tell Ezra Klein, "I'll agree to redistribution if you agree to a free market?" I might as well offer him the Brooklyn Bridge in exchange for the Fountain of Youth.

I have been a big fan of Brink's since I first bought **Against the Dead Hand** (<http://www.amazon.com/Against-Dead-Hand-Uncertain-Capitalism/dp/0471442771>) off of Amazon at the suggestion of **Instapundit** ([http://pajamasmedia.com/instapundit/oldarchives/2002\\_03\\_10\\_instapundit\\_archive.htm#75013340](http://pajamasmedia.com/instapundit/oldarchives/2002_03_10_instapundit_archive.htm#75013340)). But Bryan's reaction to his first Liberalitarian discussion is the exact same reaction I have every time I watch Brink talk about his frustration with Barack Obama on **Bloggingheads** (<http://bloggingheads.tv/>). This scene from Casino pretty much sums it up:



Brink just does not get the true nature of the Democratic party. The Democratic party is not controlled by the Ezra Klein's of the world who are for taxing employee health benefits. The Democratic Party is controlled by AFSCME, SEIU, the NEA, the AFT, and the UAW,. Unions don't care about the awesome ideas of Brink and Ezra. Watch NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin admit as much in this video (skip to 21:38):



Chanin says:

Despite what some among us would like to believe [the NEA is effective] **not because of our creative ideas**; it is not because of the merit of our positions; it is not because we care about children; and it is not because we have a vision of a great public school for every child.

The NEA and its affiliates are effective advocates **because we have power**. And we have power because there are more than **3.2 million people** who are willing to pay us hundreds of million of dollars in dues each year because they believe that we are the unions that can most effectively represent them; the union that can protect their rights and advance their interests as education employees. ...

When all is said and done, NEA affiliates must never lose sight of the fact that they are unions. And **what unions do first and foremost is represent their members**.

The Democratic Party, to its core, is about growing and maintaining the power of the state ... which just happens to also be the fastest growing sector of the labor movement. Big labor supplies the bodies and the money for Democratic campaigns, especially in primaries. Big labor could care less about most of Brink's **proposed common ground with liberals** ([http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/2008/05/20/how\\_big\\_is\\_the\\_tent\\_of\\_liberal/](http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/2008/05/20/how_big_is_the_tent_of_liberal/)). Civil liberties, censorship, drug policy ... big labor doesn't care about these issues. And Brink's concern with "extreme assertions of executive power"? How's that TARP justified government/union takeover of the auto industry rubbing libertarians these days?

And what about the stuff that Brink used to care about? You know, **fighting off the dead hand off the state?** (<http://www.amazon.com/Against-Dead-Hand-Uncertain-Capitalism/dp/0471442771>). How's that going? How is Obama doing in that area, on **health care** (<http://bloggingheads.tv/diavlogs/19870?in=28:07&out=39:27>), **energy** (<http://bloggingheads.tv/diavlogs/21007?in=37:11&out=44:11>), and **industrial policy** (<http://bloggingheads.tv/diavlogs/19870?in=39:59&out=47:34>)?

I realize Brink is **taking a long view** (<http://bloggingheads.tv/diavlogs/20342?in=43:54&out=55:36>) with his liberalitarian project, but big labor's control over the Democratic Party is growing under Obama, not receding. I'll grant that under Obama Brink will eventually witness policy victories on same sex marriage, decreased defense spending, and amnesty (which will only happen if it is guaranteed to swell the rolls of the SEIU).

But on every other issue that Brink cares about, the Bob Chanin's of the world are gonna whup Brink's butt every time. In other words, if Brink thinks he can change the actual policies pursued by actual Democrats in office, then, in Joe Pesci's words, "you better get your own f\*\*\*\*ing army, pal."

**Average:**

Your rating: None Average: 1 (1 vote)

## Comments

**what?** ([/conn-carroll/joe-pesci-on-liberalitarianism#comment-33868](http://conn-carroll/joe-pesci-on-liberalitarianism#comment-33868))

Submitted by someone on Fri, 07/24/2009 - 18:02.

This just seems like an unfocused rant.