Mark Levin on President Woodrow Wilson

Author : Ellis Washington

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No doubt a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the inalienable rights of the individual, and a great deal that was mere vague sentiment and pleasing speculation has been put forward as fundamental principle.

Living political constitutions must be Darwinian in structure and in practice. Society is a living organism and must obey the laws of life, not of mechanics; it must develop.

~ Woodrow Wilson, “Constitutional Government in the United States” (1908)

In my last column, I made the historical connection between presidents Wilson and Obama, characterizing Obama as “Wilson reborn.” In other words, if the radical legislation Wilson signed 100 years ago in 1913 was what I call “the birth of a Tragedy,” then America is collectively living through the ghoulish resurrection of Wilson through Obama. To help people understand the existential connection between these progressive leaders, Mark Levin, a conservative intellectual, radio host and best-selling author, on his Dec. 19 show, took the occasion to read from Woodrow Wilson’s 1908 treatise, “Constitutional Government in the United States.”

Wilsons wrote:

“No doubt a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the inalienable rights of the individual, and a great deal that was mere vague sentiment and pleasing speculation has been put forward as fundamental principle. The rights of man are easy to discourse of, may be very pleasingly magnified in the sentences of such constitutions as it used to satisfy the revolutionary ardor of French leaders to draw up and affect to put into operation; but they are infinitely hard to translate into practice. Such theories are never ‘law’; no matter what the name or the formal authority of the document in which they are embodied. Only that is ‘law’ which can be executed, and the abstract rights of man are singularly difficult of execution.”

Levin was so outraged by what Wilson wrote that he said, “This one sentence tells you everything you need to know about Barack Obama and the left. In that one sentence, Woodrow

Wilson and every Democrat president and some Republican presidents since have rejected the basis for Western Civilization. …" Mark continued, "The basis for the Enlightenment; even more broadly, what cuts to the core of Judaism and Christianity, individual will [which is what Wilson means by] '*a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the inalienable rights of the individual*.'" Levin characterizes these words as Woodrow Wilson dismissing the Declaration of Independence.

Wilson further wrote, "Political liberty consists in the best practicable adjustment between the power of government and the privilege of the individual. And the freedom to alter the adjustment is as important as the adjustment itself for the ease and progress of affairs and the contentment of the citizen." Levin replied, "Dictatorship in the name of the people is perfectly acceptable. The government has the authority to adjust its power as it sees fit. Now do you get a better a feel for where Barack Obama is coming from?"

Wilson wrote, "The makers of our federal Constitution followed the scheme as they found it expounded, in Montesquieu, followed it with genuine scientific enthusiasm. The admirable expositions of the 'Federalist' read like thoughtful applications of Montesquieu to the political needs and circumstances of America." And that, "They are full of the *theory* of checks and balances. … Politics is turned into mechanics under his touch." This prompted Levin to proclaim, "He [Wilson] is rejecting utterly and completely the structure of the Constitution."

Asserted Wilson: "The trouble with the theory [of limited and divided government] is that government is not a machine, but a living thing. This is where the living and breathing constitution comes from. It is modified by its environment, necessitated by its tasks, shaped to its functions by the sheer pressure of life." Levin countered: "And so you have a man like Obama with Obamacare, with EPA, with gun control, because we have a living document that has to be modified by its environment. There are no truths. There is no stable law."

Wilson continued, "No living thing can have its organs offset against each other, as checks, and live. So the government is a living thing. It's like a body, and it cannot live unless it changes and it adapts. …"

Overall Levin thought that Wilson wasn't all that smart, that he borrowed heavily from Plato's "Republic," wherein Plato sets up in essence a predecessor to a communist regime, a predecessor to Islamic fundamentalism. Levin even made the connection that the Ayatollah Khomeini cited Plato's "Republic" as the basis of his own dictatorial seizing of power and government.

The *leitmotiv* of Wilson's arguments reveals his entrenched evolutionary/living constitutionalism worldview when he writes, "It is accountable to Darwin, not to Newton. It is modified by its environment, necessitated by its tasks, shaped to its functions by the sheer pressure of life."

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