



**NOAM
CHOMSKY**

**INTELLECTUAL
PROSECUTION**

1
00:00:00,120 --> 00:00:03,740

The establishment left has just dropped entirely.

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00:00:03,740 --> 00:00:05,509

So the democratic party, whatever that is,

3
00:00:05,509 --> 00:00:14,110

abandoned the working class a generation ago.

4
00:00:14,110 --> 00:00:17,580

Okay.

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00:00:17,580 --> 00:00:18,580

Let's get straight into the questions.

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00:00:18,580 --> 00:00:19,580

Is that all right?

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00:00:19,580 --> 00:00:20,580

Oh yeah.

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00:00:20,580 --> 00:00:21,580

Okay.

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00:00:21,580 --> 00:00:23,939

So Peter, you can mute your mic if you don't mind.

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00:00:23,939 --> 00:00:24,939

Got it.

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00:00:24,939 --> 00:00:25,939

Okay.

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00:00:25,939 --> 00:00:26,939

What I wanted to know is the first,

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00:00:26,939 --> 00:00:30,199

I wanted to define the left and essentially
the way that I'm going to do that

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00:00:30,199 --> 00:00:34,820

is by asking you, what are the traits in the
left, the left,

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00:00:34,820 --> 00:00:37,890

political left in the past century that have
changed and what's remained the

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00:00:37,890 --> 00:00:39,910

same as far as you can tell?

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00:00:39,910 --> 00:00:42,469

Well, of course,

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00:00:42,469 --> 00:00:47,390

the left has moved consistently to new

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00:00:47,390 --> 00:00:50,160

issues that weren't even noticed before.

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00:00:50,160 --> 00:00:53,239

So if you go back a century, well,

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00:00:53,239 --> 00:00:58,479

there were elements of the left that you could
call, say, feminist.

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00:00:58,479 --> 00:01:01,060

It's nothing like the dominant,

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00:01:01,060 --> 00:01:05,619

the dominant element in left

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00:01:05,619 --> 00:01:07,950

politics that exists today.

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00:01:07,950 --> 00:01:11,170

You go back 20 years ago,

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00:01:11,170 --> 00:01:14,930

there was very little concern about the environment.

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00:01:14,930 --> 00:01:19,940

Now the left recognizes that it's an existential problem.

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00:01:19,940 --> 00:01:22,770

On the other hand,

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00:01:22,770 --> 00:01:27,890

and so there are many cases in which there's been progress in understanding

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00:01:27,890 --> 00:01:29,530

and dedicated work.

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00:01:29,530 --> 00:01:32,030

There are other cases in which there's regression.

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00:01:32,030 --> 00:01:37,130

So go back not very far,

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00:01:37,130 --> 00:01:40,010

a couple of decades,

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00:01:40,010 --> 00:01:43,729

labor organizing was a major issue for the left.

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00:01:43,729 --> 00:01:48,899

It was recognized and understood that the driving force in any

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00:01:48,899 --> 00:01:53,780

social and political economic change is going to be an organized working class.

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00:01:53,780 --> 00:01:55,220

That's been,

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00:01:55,220 --> 00:02:00,340

well, it depends what you call the left,

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00:02:00,340 --> 00:02:04,530

but the establishment left has just dropped it entirely.

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00:02:04,530 --> 00:02:06,560

So the democratic party,

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00:02:06,560 --> 00:02:07,940

whatever that is,

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00:02:07,940 --> 00:02:12,290

abandoned the working class a generation ago,

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00:02:12,290 --> 00:02:16,140

handed it over to their class enemy.

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00:02:16,140 --> 00:02:20,019

Activists on the left have become engaged

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00:02:20,019 --> 00:02:24,590

justifiably with issues that are sometimes called identity

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00:02:24,590 --> 00:02:25,590

politics.

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00:02:25,590 --> 00:02:28,700

Those are real issues, have to be dealt with.

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00:02:28,700 --> 00:02:31,099

But class issues have been subordinated,

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00:02:31,099 --> 00:02:36,019

marginalized, and they're very real.

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00:02:36,019 --> 00:02:40,090

That's a deficiency that has to be overcome.

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00:02:40,090 --> 00:02:44,990

All of these things interact when people talk about intersectionality,

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00:02:44,990 --> 00:02:47,310

yes, they're right,

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00:02:47,310 --> 00:02:52,360

but it's been more of a slogan than an actual achievement.

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00:02:52,360 --> 00:02:58,510

So I think if you look across the board, there's progress and regression.

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00:02:58,510 --> 00:03:01,390

What is your opinion on identity politics?

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00:03:01,390 --> 00:03:05,620

The issues are significant.

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00:03:05,620 --> 00:03:08,500

They have to, they cannot,

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00:03:08,500 --> 00:03:15,480

each type of identity politics cannot dominate

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00:03:15,480 --> 00:03:19,000

a commitment of an organized left that hopes

to achieve things.

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00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:20,590

They have to interact,

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00:03:20,590 --> 00:03:26,870

be mutually supportive and they have to crucially bring in the class issues that

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00:03:26,870 --> 00:03:29,200

have been subordinated.

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00:03:29,200 --> 00:03:37,670

Actually the most active extreme form of identity politics is white nationalism.

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00:03:37,670 --> 00:03:41,630

Something I'm trying to determine with my research is when does the left go too

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00:03:41,630 --> 00:03:45,129

far and when does the right go too far, politically speaking?

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00:03:45,129 --> 00:03:47,540

And I wanted to know what your opinion is on that.

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00:03:47,540 --> 00:03:49,439

Just to pick the issues.

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00:03:49,439 --> 00:03:54,349

I mean, the right at this point is simply suicidal.

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00:03:54,349 --> 00:03:58,980

It's not a question of going too far.

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00:03:58,980 --> 00:04:04,540

The right is committed to destruction of organized human society.

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00:04:04,540 --> 00:04:06,220

Is that an extreme statement?

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00:04:06,220 --> 00:04:08,230

Maybe, but it's correct.

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00:04:08,230 --> 00:04:10,379

Just take a look at the Republican party.

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00:04:10,379 --> 00:04:13,670

What is the Republican party committed to?

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00:04:13,670 --> 00:04:19,930

It's committed to destroying human life and not in the long term.

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00:04:19,930 --> 00:04:24,200

The Paris agreements a couple of years ago,

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00:04:24,200 --> 00:04:28,530

they weren't fabulous, but they were something at least.

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00:04:28,530 --> 00:04:32,789

Their original effort intent was to destroy the human race.

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00:04:32,789 --> 00:04:39,009

It was to create a treaty in which there would be verifiable commitments to some

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00:04:39,009 --> 00:04:43,590

measures to avert the huge threat of global warming.

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00:04:43,590 --> 00:04:45,449

Couldn't get a treaty.

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00:04:45,449 --> 00:04:49,800

It had to be a voluntary agreement.

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00:04:49,800 --> 00:04:50,949

Why?

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00:04:50,949 --> 00:04:53,729

Republican senators wouldn't accept it.

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00:04:53,729 --> 00:04:58,949

I take the Republican primary in 2016.

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00:04:58,949 --> 00:05:05,750

Every single candidate, without exception, either denied that global warming is taking

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00:05:05,750 --> 00:05:06,750

place

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00:05:06,750 --> 00:05:09,780

or else said, maybe it is, but we don't care.

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00:05:09,780 --> 00:05:16,400

John Kasich, who was the governor of Ohio, who's considered the real moderate of the

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00:05:16,400 --> 00:05:17,400

group,

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00:05:17,400 --> 00:05:22,340

said, yeah, we recognize that global warming is taking place and it's serious,

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00:05:22,340 --> 00:05:28,460

but we in Ohio are going to use our coal and we're not going to apologize for it.

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00:05:28,460 --> 00:05:29,590

That's the moderate Republican.

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00:05:29,590 --> 00:05:32,090

Then you go over to the White House.

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00:05:32,090 --> 00:05:34,150

You have total maniacs.

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00:05:34,150 --> 00:05:36,720

People who say we don't care.

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00:05:36,720 --> 00:05:41,850

I said, we'll destroy the world, but we'll
have profit tomorrow and are leading the way

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00:05:41,850 --> 00:05:45,410

towards destruction, consciously aware of
what they're doing.

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00:05:45,410 --> 00:05:46,650

No secret about it.

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00:05:46,650 --> 00:05:47,650

Easy to demonstrate.

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00:05:47,650 --> 00:05:50,000

How far to the right is this?

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00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:54,020

I mean, there's no words for it.

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00:05:54,020 --> 00:05:55,300

One question.

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00:05:55,300 --> 00:05:56,419

What about the left?

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00:05:56,419 --> 00:05:58,100

When does the left go too far?

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00:05:58,100 --> 00:06:00,979

It's not a matter of going too far.

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00:06:00,979 --> 00:06:07,180

It's a matter of making tactical decisions that are incorrect.

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00:06:07,180 --> 00:06:13,380

You have to, if you, you may, there's, it may be that some of the goals go to, are debatable.

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00:06:13,380 --> 00:06:14,820

Talk about that.

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00:06:14,820 --> 00:06:20,090

But insofar as they're the kinds of goals that, say, we think we can support,

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00:06:20,090 --> 00:06:26,539

you have to ask whether the tactics that are used are well designed to meet those goals

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00:06:26,539 --> 00:06:28,690

or else undermine the goals.

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00:06:28,690 --> 00:06:31,280

So let's take concrete cases.

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00:06:31,280 --> 00:06:39,740

As you know, I was very active in the anti-war movement, resistance movement during the 1960s.

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00:06:39,740 --> 00:06:41,780

I had contact with Vietnamese.

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00:06:41,780 --> 00:06:46,880

The Vietnamese were appalled by some of the tactics that were being used.

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00:06:46,880 --> 00:06:55,290

I remember meetings where the Vietnamese would plead with American activists not to do things

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00:06:55,290 --> 00:06:57,330

like what the weathermen are doing.

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00:06:57,330 --> 00:07:03,620

The weathermen, a lot of young people, many of them I knew, they were perfectly sincere.

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00:07:03,620 --> 00:07:08,440

They thought that the way to end the war is to smash up the windows on Main Street.

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00:07:08,440 --> 00:07:10,590

It's not the way to end the war.

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00:07:10,590 --> 00:07:16,890

That was the way to enrage construction workers and others, so they'd be more pro-war than

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00:07:16,890 --> 00:07:18,780

they were before.

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00:07:18,780 --> 00:07:23,440

The Vietnamese didn't care whether Americans felt good.

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00:07:23,440 --> 00:07:25,190

They cared whether they could survive.

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00:07:25,190 --> 00:07:33,110

So what they advocated were measures so mild that a lot of the war movement would just

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00:07:33,110 --> 00:07:34,110

laugh at them.

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00:07:34,110 --> 00:07:37,069

But that's the kind of choice that has to be made all the time.

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00:07:37,069 --> 00:07:40,009

I can give you many examples today.

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00:07:40,009 --> 00:07:46,669

So going too far, I think the way we should rephrase that is picking tactics that are

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00:07:46,669 --> 00:07:48,060

going to undermine

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00:07:48,060 --> 00:07:55,520

the perhaps legitimate and just goals that you say you're advocating.

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00:07:55,520 --> 00:08:03,190

On the discussion of the left and the right, in terms of their differences and their similarities,

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00:08:03,190 --> 00:08:08,169

oftentimes the left are characterized as being pro-government and the right is characterized

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00:08:08,169 --> 00:08:09,260

as being pro-corporation.

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00:08:09,260 --> 00:08:15,351

And you have written about the revolving door between the two, between regulators and the

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00:08:15,351 --> 00:08:19,690

regulated, in your book like Manufacturing Consent.

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00:08:19,690 --> 00:08:25,260

Now, does this blur the line of what it means to be a left-winger and a right-winger?

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00:08:25,260 --> 00:08:28,909

Do the left and the right still exist?

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00:08:28,909 --> 00:08:31,470

Did they ever exist?

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00:08:31,470 --> 00:08:34,269

I mean, let's take being pro- or anti-government.

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00:08:34,269 --> 00:08:39,669

That's not a general position of the left.

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00:08:39,669 --> 00:08:44,279

That's a tactical choice in particular circumstances.

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00:08:44,279 --> 00:08:53,690

So when you have a state like the United States that's largely dominated by private tyrannies

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00:08:53,690 --> 00:08:56,640

with very little public voice,

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00:08:56,640 --> 00:09:05,750

in that particular circumstance, the option available to you to overcome this is governmental

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00:09:05,750 --> 00:09:06,750

action,

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00:09:06,750 --> 00:09:10,780

which at least to some extent is responsive to public opinion.

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00:09:10,780 --> 00:09:20,260

In other circumstances, when you're trying to construct a really libertarian left participatory

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00:09:20,260 --> 00:09:21,380

society,

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00:09:21,380 --> 00:09:26,280

you might want to dissolve governmental structures as a legitimate authority.

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00:09:26,280 --> 00:09:28,850

There's no right or wrong answer to that.

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00:09:28,850 --> 00:09:34,410

So, for example, let's take, say, media.

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00:09:34,410 --> 00:09:37,089

The United States is unusual.

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00:09:37,089 --> 00:09:42,070

It's different from other developed societies in many respects.

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00:09:42,070 --> 00:09:46,829

One respect is it doesn't have public, barely has public media.

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00:09:46,829 --> 00:09:49,200

Media are privatized, overwhelming.

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00:09:49,200 --> 00:09:53,399

It's kind of a little tiny fringe on the left, nothing like, off the fringe.

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00:09:53,399 --> 00:09:58,000

So it's like nothing like the BBC or anything like that.

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00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:01,120

We can look at why this happened.

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00:10:01,120 --> 00:10:08,700

Certainly not implicit in U.S. history, like the founders of the country, the framers,

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00:10:08,700 --> 00:10:13,290

believe they interpreted the First Amendment very differently than the way we do.

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00:10:13,290 --> 00:10:18,579

They thought it meant that the government ought to take an active role in sponsoring

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00:10:18,579 --> 00:10:20,250

a free and independent press.

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00:10:20,250 --> 00:10:24,000

That's why we have the post office, for example.

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00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:31,050

In its early years, the post office was almost totally devoted to providing a cheap,

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00:10:31,050 --> 00:10:37,399

free, basically subsidies to a wide variety of journals and newspapers

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00:10:37,399 --> 00:10:42,510

to encourage a varied, free, independent press.

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00:10:42,510 --> 00:10:48,240

Over the years, the power of private power in the United States,

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00:10:48,240 --> 00:10:56,510

which is quite unusual, managed to privatize radio, television and more recently, the Internet.

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00:10:56,510 --> 00:11:01,480

But that's and yes, in those circumstances,
it would make sense to call for a public voice.

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00:11:01,480 --> 00:11:07,340

Under other circumstances, you might want
to have local, local

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00:11:07,340 --> 00:11:13,339

based, you know, worker based, community based
media.

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00:11:13,339 --> 00:11:15,529

And there's many other such questions.

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00:11:15,529 --> 00:11:20,000

You're a self-described anarchist, and I'd
like to know what is the difference between

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00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:23,769

your beliefs and contemporary libertarianism?

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00:11:23,769 --> 00:11:33,700

Well, first of all, what's called libertarian
in the United States is some ultra right advocacy

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00:11:33,700 --> 00:11:35,709

of private tyrannies.

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00:11:35,709 --> 00:11:40,990

Nothing, nothing like anything that was libertarian
traditionally.

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00:11:40,990 --> 00:11:44,019

But if you're talking about left libertarian,
it's.

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00:11:44,019 --> 00:11:50,630

You know, covers quite a range, but just as

the term anarchism does.

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00:11:50,630 --> 00:11:54,720

But there is a kind of a core at the center of it, I think.

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00:11:54,720 --> 00:12:01,100

The core running through the whole tradition, many variations,

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00:12:01,100 --> 00:12:06,450

is the recognition that there are certain structures

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00:12:06,450 --> 00:12:15,330

in social, political life, economic life that are that have to justify their own legitimacy.

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00:12:15,330 --> 00:12:17,170

They are coercive, authoritarian.

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00:12:17,170 --> 00:12:24,649

There is hierarchy, domination.

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00:12:24,649 --> 00:12:27,940

Somebody gives you or somebody takes them.

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00:12:27,940 --> 00:12:32,530

All of those structures have to be are none of those structures are self-justifying.

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00:12:32,530 --> 00:12:35,230

They have a burden of justification.

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00:12:35,230 --> 00:12:40,639

If they can't meet it, which is almost always the case, they should be dismantled.

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00:12:40,639 --> 00:12:42,650

I think that's the core principle.

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00:12:42,650 --> 00:12:49,240

And my own view is that once you get to the basics, almost every normal person is an anarchist

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00:12:49,240 --> 00:12:50,600

in this sense.

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00:12:50,600 --> 00:12:53,410

But that's then you have to ask how it applies.

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00:12:53,410 --> 00:12:55,450

So do you have a job somewhere?

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00:12:55,450 --> 00:13:03,820

Well, if you have a job in a business corporation, let's say you're living in a tyranny.

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00:13:03,820 --> 00:13:08,220

So extreme that no totalitarian dictator ever dreamed of it.

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00:13:08,220 --> 00:13:14,720

So, for example, Stalin didn't tell people that you have 10 minutes to go to the bathroom

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00:13:14,720 --> 00:13:15,720

every couple hours.

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00:13:15,720 --> 00:13:18,339

You have to wear these clothes, not some other clothes.

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00:13:18,339 --> 00:13:22,200

You're not allowed to stop to talk to a friend for a minute.

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00:13:22,200 --> 00:13:25,380

You're monitored, say, at an Amazon warehouse.

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00:13:25,380 --> 00:13:32,529

So that if you don't pick up enough things fast enough, like maybe you stop to breathe

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00:13:32,529 --> 00:13:33,529

or something,

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00:13:33,529 --> 00:13:34,529

you get a demerit.

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00:13:34,529 --> 00:13:36,660

There was no totalitarian dictatorship like that.

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00:13:36,660 --> 00:13:37,839

That's most of people's lives.

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00:13:37,839 --> 00:13:40,470

Well, is that a legitimate structure?

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00:13:40,470 --> 00:13:44,280

Is the labor contract legitimate?

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00:13:44,280 --> 00:13:49,000

Actually, traditional classical liberals didn't think so.

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00:13:49,000 --> 00:13:51,880

Abraham Lincoln didn't think so.

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00:13:51,880 --> 00:13:53,950

The Republican Party didn't think so.

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00:13:53,950 --> 00:13:58,459

The Republican Party's slogan in the mid-19th century, early Industrial Revolution, was

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00:14:06,940 --> 00:13:59,759

that

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00:14:06,940 --> 00:14:09,990

until you become a free person again.

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00:14:09,990 --> 00:14:14,511

Well, OK, those ideas have been driven out of people's heads, but I don't think they're

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00:14:14,511 --> 00:14:16,639

very far below the surface.

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00:14:16,639 --> 00:14:18,720

They can emerge.

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00:14:18,720 --> 00:14:23,980

And that would be authentic left libertarianism, just one aspect.

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00:14:23,980 --> 00:14:25,860

Crucial aspect.

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00:14:25,860 --> 00:14:30,990

So it seems like you overlap with regards to free exchange of speech and ideas.

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00:14:30,990 --> 00:14:36,089

And I remember a while ago you helped, you defended a Holocaust denier.

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00:14:36,089 --> 00:14:40,260

And I wanted to know if you still stand by that.

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00:14:40,260 --> 00:14:41,329

Defending a Holocaust denier?

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00:14:41,329 --> 00:14:43,230

I mean, defending his freedom of speech.

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00:14:43,230 --> 00:14:44,230

Sure.

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00:14:44,230 --> 00:14:48,269

I mean, this is just standard classical liberalism.

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00:14:48,269 --> 00:14:50,690

There's two choices.

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00:14:50,690 --> 00:14:59,839

Either some form of power and authority, typically the state or other, determines what's true

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00:14:59,839 --> 00:15:05,480

and punishes any deviation from what it claims is true.

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00:15:05,480 --> 00:15:09,600

Or else you allow views to be expressed that you don't like.

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00:15:09,600 --> 00:15:15,180

In fact, if you really believe in freedom of speech, the only issues are, do I allow

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00:15:15,180 --> 00:15:18,470

speech that I don't like?

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00:15:18,470 --> 00:15:24,529

Hitler and Stalin had nothing against speech that they liked.

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00:15:24,529 --> 00:15:30,190

Nowadays, there's this trans rights versus free speech debate.

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00:15:30,190 --> 00:15:32,150

And I want to know what you think about that.

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00:15:32,150 --> 00:15:33,459

Where do you lie on that?

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00:15:33,459 --> 00:15:38,139

Let's talk about Holocaust denial for another minute.

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00:15:38,139 --> 00:15:43,620

The Holocaust denial is the norm in Western society.

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00:15:43,620 --> 00:15:53,470

So, just to take an example, a couple of years ago, an article appeared in the New York Review,

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00:15:53,470 --> 00:16:01,089

the major journal of left liberalism, in which the author, good, decent left liberal, was

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00:16:01,089 --> 00:16:04,620

reviewing a book by a major American historian.

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00:16:04,620 --> 00:16:13,870

He said in his review, he was interested to learn that when the early explorers came to

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00:16:13,870 --> 00:16:21,600

the Western Hemisphere, there were only about a million people from the tropical forests

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00:16:21,600 --> 00:16:22,810

to the frozen north.

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00:16:22,810 --> 00:16:28,740

He was off by about 60 or 70 million who were wiped out.

248

00:16:28,740 --> 00:16:31,589

Is that Holocaust denial?

249

00:16:31,589 --> 00:16:33,459

Did anybody say he should be imprisoned?

250

00:16:33,459 --> 00:16:36,160

Did anybody even notice?

251

00:16:36,160 --> 00:16:40,400

I mean, these things happen all the time.

252

00:16:40,400 --> 00:16:46,930

It's a particular form that we don't like,
that somebody doesn't like, that's considered,

253

00:16:46,930 --> 00:16:48,990

that has to be suppressed.

254

00:16:48,990 --> 00:16:53,089

And that's worth keeping in mind when you
talk about Holocaust denial.

255

00:16:53,089 --> 00:16:59,140

So, it seems like you have some similarities
with Jordan Peterson on this issue.

256

00:16:59,140 --> 00:17:02,449

And I know that you haven't talked much about
Jordan Peterson.

257

00:17:02,449 --> 00:17:06,730

And I wanted to know if you had any disagreements
with what he says.

258

00:17:06,730 --> 00:17:09,490

Frankly, I pay very little attention.

259

00:17:09,490 --> 00:17:16,370

But if you want to know about Jordan Peterson,
I think the best thing I can refer you to

260

00:17:16,370 --> 00:17:24,110

is an article by Nathan Robinson, a very sharp,
acute critic in his journal Current Affairs.

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00:17:24,110 --> 00:17:29,930

It's called something like The Intellectual
We Deserve or something like that.

262

00:17:29,930 --> 00:17:32,390

I think that's basically my answer.

263

00:17:32,390 --> 00:17:37,440

Other than that, I don't pay any attention.

264

00:17:37,440 --> 00:17:41,200

I mean, there's some issues on which I probably
agree with Hitler.

265

00:17:41,200 --> 00:17:44,789

No, it doesn't mean much.

266

00:17:44,789 --> 00:17:51,070

On that subject, I think it's Aristotle, right,
who says that people get the governments they

267

00:17:51,070 --> 00:17:52,890

deserve.

268

00:17:52,890 --> 00:17:54,700

Is this kind of the line?

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00:17:54,700 --> 00:17:58,140

Aristotle said that people get the governments
they deserve.

270

00:17:58,140 --> 00:18:02,020

Is this kind of what you're implying, but for intellectuals?

271

00:18:02,020 --> 00:18:05,950

No, I don't think people get the government they deserve.

272

00:18:05,950 --> 00:18:09,440

They get the government that power systems impose.

273

00:18:09,440 --> 00:18:11,960

That's quite different.

274

00:18:11,960 --> 00:18:17,840

On the systems of power, you had mentioned in Manufacturing Consent the idea of the principle

275

00:18:17,840 --> 00:18:24,770

of bureaucratic affinity, the idea that large scale bureaucracies will ally with other large

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00:18:24,770 --> 00:18:31,140

scale bureaucracies to sort of maintain a status quo and to aid each other.

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00:18:31,140 --> 00:18:37,090

And that when a company like when a media company, for example, tries true journalism,

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00:18:37,090 --> 00:18:42,559

these large bureaucracies be either the government or corporations will give the media company

279

00:18:42,559 --> 00:18:48,450

flack and sort of cease to work with them.

280

00:18:48,450 --> 00:18:56,070

My question for you is, does the principle

of bureaucratic affinity apply to educational

281

00:18:56,070 --> 00:19:02,340

institutions like large universities?

282

00:19:02,340 --> 00:19:05,590

To a varying extent.

283

00:19:05,590 --> 00:19:09,190

Depends on the university, depends on the time and the era.

284

00:19:09,190 --> 00:19:18,950

You know, there's in our current situation, current circumstances with all their flaws,

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00:19:18,950 --> 00:19:28,140

the universities are one of the last bastions of relative freedom of expression and research.

286

00:19:28,140 --> 00:19:32,530

Even of worker self-government to a certain extent.

287

00:19:32,530 --> 00:19:40,820

Faculty at a university has a degree of control over their working lives, which is very rare

288

00:19:40,820 --> 00:19:44,800

in the existing socio-political system.

289

00:19:44,800 --> 00:19:48,230

So I don't think you can answer a simple yes or no.

290

00:19:48,230 --> 00:19:51,630

By comparative standards, they're relatively free.

291

00:19:51,630 --> 00:19:53,230

They have flaws.

292

00:19:53,230 --> 00:19:59,120

So, for example, if you take a look at the American university system, well, about just

293

00:19:59,120 --> 00:20:06,460

a few years ago, you couldn't find a Marxist professor anywhere.

294

00:20:06,460 --> 00:20:11,750

Any other country in the world, they'd be all over the place.

295

00:20:11,750 --> 00:20:13,510

Not here.

296

00:20:13,510 --> 00:20:18,290

May I ask what do you attribute that to?

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00:20:18,290 --> 00:20:24,930

In your in past comments, you had mentioned how academics maintain a sort of status quo

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00:20:24,930 --> 00:20:30,740

as opposed to being the sort of radicals that they display themselves as.

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00:20:30,740 --> 00:20:32,460

Do you find that still true?

300

00:20:32,460 --> 00:20:37,530

Or do you find that academics are changing?

301

00:20:37,530 --> 00:20:43,690

Well, and there's a kind of an ebb and flow.

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00:20:43,690 --> 00:20:48,690

I think it's less true than it was 50 or 60 years ago.

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00:20:48,690 --> 00:20:51,490

But it's more true than it ought to be.

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00:20:51,490 --> 00:20:53,429

And it's not just academics.

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00:20:53,429 --> 00:20:55,540

It's intellectuals generally.

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00:20:55,540 --> 00:20:59,960

Look over the whole history of intellectuals for a couple of thousand years, in fact.

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00:20:59,960 --> 00:21:00,960

And you find that overwhelmingly, they tend to stay in the middle.

308

00:21:00,960 --> 00:21:02,230

A couple of thousand years, in fact.

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00:21:02,230 --> 00:21:05,330

And you find that overwhelmingly, they tend to support power systems.

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00:21:05,330 --> 00:21:08,929

There are a few who don't.

311

00:21:08,929 --> 00:21:11,000

They're usually treated pretty harshly.

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00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:18,419

In fact, just take the term intellectual in its modern sense, was first used at the time

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00:21:18,419 --> 00:21:22,020

of the Dreyfus trial in France, late 19th

century.

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00:21:22,020 --> 00:21:29,419

Most of the intellectuals, the prestigious intellectuals, the ones of the French Academy

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00:21:29,419 --> 00:21:32,930

and so on, bitterly condemned the Dreyfus arts.

316

00:21:32,930 --> 00:21:40,030

How dare these writers and artists question the majesty of our army, state and so on.

317

00:21:40,030 --> 00:21:46,039

And there were a few like Emil Zola, a couple of others who stood up against it.

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00:21:46,039 --> 00:21:47,110

They were persecuted.

319

00:21:47,110 --> 00:21:49,850

And we may honor them today, but not at the time.

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00:21:49,850 --> 00:21:53,600

And Emil Zola had to flee France.

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00:21:53,600 --> 00:21:57,150

That's the record in one form or another, all through history.

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00:21:57,150 --> 00:22:02,650

So, in fact, shortly after this, the First World War came along.

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00:22:02,650 --> 00:22:10,150

It was very dramatic to see what happened to the intellectual classes during this, including

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00:22:10,150 --> 00:22:12,850

the left, during the First World War.

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00:22:12,850 --> 00:22:20,100

In every single country, Germany, France, England, the United States, the intellectuals

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00:22:20,100 --> 00:22:27,140

lined up almost 100 percent in passionate support of their own country.

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00:22:27,140 --> 00:22:30,710

The ones who didn't, many of them ended up in jail.

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00:22:30,710 --> 00:22:35,750

Bertrand Russell, Rosa Luxemburg, Gene Debs.

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00:22:35,750 --> 00:22:36,900

That's the pattern.

330

00:22:36,900 --> 00:22:40,560

We're back, we're back.

331

00:22:40,560 --> 00:22:43,630

Peter, do you want to repeat the question?

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00:22:43,630 --> 00:22:44,760

Super quick.

333

00:22:44,760 --> 00:22:46,720

This is my wife.

334

00:22:46,720 --> 00:22:49,179

Hi, thank you.

335

00:22:49,179 --> 00:22:50,179

Thank you.

336

00:22:50,179 --> 00:22:51,870

Hello, Professor Noam Chomsky's wife.

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00:22:51,870 --> 00:22:52,870

Okay.

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00:22:52,870 --> 00:23:01,960

The question in summary was, in Manufacturing Consent, you teach us that big media is allied

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00:23:01,960 --> 00:23:03,809

with the government, corporate elites.

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00:23:03,809 --> 00:23:10,700

As a result, the framework of big media's discussion fits comfortably in a propaganda

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00:23:10,700 --> 00:23:16,340

model, an acceptable framework on how to analyze problems and talk about issues.

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00:23:16,340 --> 00:23:24,919

Well, if academia itself is allied with government and corporate elites, then wouldn't they also

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00:23:24,919 --> 00:23:26,929

fit a propaganda model?

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00:23:26,929 --> 00:23:30,340

And if not, what makes them so unique?

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00:23:30,340 --> 00:23:36,070

Well, for one thing, there's several things that are, to some extent, it's true.

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00:23:36,070 --> 00:23:43,240

But notice that the relation of media to, say, corporate elites is very different from

347

00:23:43,240 --> 00:23:46,340

the relation of universities to corporate elites.

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00:23:46,340 --> 00:23:49,970

In the case of media, it's just, that's what they are.

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00:23:49,970 --> 00:23:55,110

The media are major corporations, parts of bigger corporations.

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00:23:55,110 --> 00:24:04,630

Flow in and out of government, you know, very heavily subject to government edicts and so

351

00:24:04,630 --> 00:24:05,630

on.

352

00:24:05,630 --> 00:24:08,220

Universities have the same influences, but much less so.

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00:24:08,220 --> 00:24:13,680

The relation of a university to corporations is, can I get a grant?

354

00:24:13,680 --> 00:24:19,220

You know, will I get a, will there be a donor who will be willing to build a building?

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00:24:19,220 --> 00:24:25,280

That's very different from being part of the corporate system, which already allows a little

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00:24:25,280 --> 00:24:26,280

flexibility.

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00:24:26,280 --> 00:24:34,710

Also, there is, we should not underestimate the fact that there is a sense of professionalism

358

00:24:34,710 --> 00:24:39,120

and intellectual responsibility.

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00:24:39,120 --> 00:24:41,340

That's true.

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00:24:41,340 --> 00:24:46,700

There are serious journalists, many of them who understand the system very well.

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00:24:46,700 --> 00:24:51,270

They didn't have to hear it from us and who try to find ways to combat it.

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00:24:51,270 --> 00:24:57,960

And it happens now in the media, they tend to be marginalized and eliminated.

363

00:24:57,960 --> 00:25:00,160

You know, they don't have to be, you know, they don't have to be in the media.

364

00:25:00,160 --> 00:25:05,399

You know, sent to the police desk, you're not really ready for big time work, you know,

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00:25:05,399 --> 00:25:06,399

that sort of thing.

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00:25:06,399 --> 00:25:12,309

And that kind of thing happens in the universities too, but probably to a slightly lesser extent.

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00:25:12,309 --> 00:25:14,970

And it depends also on the field.

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00:25:14,970 --> 00:25:20,960

So many fields in the university are almost totally free from outside pressures.

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00:25:20,960 --> 00:25:24,210

The physics department, for instance.

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00:25:24,210 --> 00:25:29,740

Some people have suggested that they should, that we should remove universities.

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00:25:29,740 --> 00:25:33,330

And this is reminiscent, Jordan Peterson, for example, said, suggests to students, don't

372

00:25:33,330 --> 00:25:38,230

go to universities anymore because of the bias, because of the unitary point of views.

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00:25:38,230 --> 00:25:42,490

And this is reminiscent of anarchist Yvonne Illman, who said, you know, we should not

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00:25:42,490 --> 00:25:43,490

go to universities.

375

00:25:43,490 --> 00:25:46,169

Listen to what Jordan Peterson is saying.

376

00:25:46,169 --> 00:25:49,030

He's saying universities are dominated by the left.

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00:25:49,030 --> 00:25:53,850

Now for him, the left, is anybody to the left of Attila the Hun.

378

00:25:53,850 --> 00:25:57,250

In fact, universities are dominated by the

right.

379

00:25:57,250 --> 00:26:00,912

He's so far on the right that that looks like the left to him.

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00:26:00,912 --> 00:26:02,039

And so he's saying, you know, we should eliminate universities.

381

00:26:02,039 --> 00:26:03,039

But the right is people who will say that university is dominated by the left.

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00:26:03,039 --> 00:26:04,980

But does it make sense to tell students not to go to universities?

383

00:26:04,980 --> 00:26:05,980

It's crazy.

384

00:26:05,980 --> 00:26:10,760

It's one of the places where you can, there's lots of things wrong,

385

00:26:10,760 --> 00:26:16,750

but there are resources and opportunities that simply don't exist anywhere else.

386

00:26:16,750 --> 00:26:24,060

You can't, there are opportunities to become a free, independent, creative individual,

387

00:26:24,060 --> 00:26:26,960

working with others that you just don't have elsewhere.

388

00:26:26,960 --> 00:26:28,860

Sorry, I misspoke.

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00:26:28,860 --> 00:26:33,640

I didn't mean that to suggest that he suggested to eliminate the universities.

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00:26:33,640 --> 00:26:37,240

I'm more trying to convey the decentralizing of universities.

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00:26:37,240 --> 00:26:38,990

So for example, an online school.

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00:26:38,990 --> 00:26:44,200

There's a lot you miss in an online school.

393

00:26:44,200 --> 00:26:46,039

Your peers.

394

00:26:46,039 --> 00:26:51,220

One of the big parts of education is the students you're with.

395

00:26:51,220 --> 00:26:55,100

That those kinds of interactions are gone online.

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00:26:55,100 --> 00:27:00,250

And they're very important for educating oneself.

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00:27:00,250 --> 00:27:05,720

Anybody who's been in a, through a school or university situation knows how you can

398

00:27:05,720 --> 00:27:11,059

learn more from interaction with your peers than from sitting in on a lecture.

399

00:27:11,059 --> 00:27:13,210

Even interaction with the faculty.

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00:27:13,210 --> 00:27:18,000

So it's one thing to sit in a lecture class
or watch a television screen.

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00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:23,630

And it's another thing to be in an actual
class where you're interacting with other

402

00:27:23,630 --> 00:27:25,429

students and with the faculty.

403

00:27:25,429 --> 00:27:27,330

So yes, there are good things.

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00:27:27,330 --> 00:27:33,580

I mean, I think it's good to try to extend
the resources of the university elsewhere.

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00:27:33,580 --> 00:27:39,750

But there's nothing to replace the direct
face to face interaction.

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00:27:39,750 --> 00:27:43,470

Not just when you're in class, but when you're
doing something else.

407

00:27:43,470 --> 00:27:49,720

When you're sitting in a McDonald's and having
a hamburger with your friends and talking.

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00:27:49,720 --> 00:27:55,440

What are your thoughts on the Christian anarchist,
Ivan Illich, and his rise in popularity amongst

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00:27:55,440 --> 00:27:57,320

social activists?

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00:27:57,320 --> 00:28:00,909

An anarchist who believed in de-schooling

society.

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00:28:00,909 --> 00:28:03,559

His popular work.

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00:28:03,559 --> 00:28:07,920

I sort of understand some of the motivation for it.

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00:28:07,920 --> 00:28:16,380

But de-schooling society is taking away from people some of their major opportunities for

414

00:28:16,380 --> 00:28:19,640

individual growth and social interaction.

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00:28:19,640 --> 00:28:22,419

And even general activism.

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00:28:22,419 --> 00:28:31,649

I mean, it's not just pure accident that over the years, student activism has been typically

417

00:28:31,649 --> 00:28:37,830

at the forefront of many of the most important social movements.

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00:28:37,830 --> 00:28:42,649

Partly it's just because young people are a period of their life when they're relatively

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00:28:42,649 --> 00:28:43,649

free.

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00:28:43,649 --> 00:28:46,420

But it's also the fact that they're together.

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00:28:46,420 --> 00:28:48,280

They can talk with one another.

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00:28:48,280 --> 00:28:51,120

They can interact.

423

00:28:51,120 --> 00:28:56,720

Something that's pretty much missing and atomized
in capitalist society.

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00:28:56,720 --> 00:29:00,190

Then I'm running into a little bit of a confusion
here.

425

00:29:00,190 --> 00:29:06,769

On the one hand, the history of intellectuals
and academia sort of lines up with the status

426

00:29:06,769 --> 00:29:07,769

quo.

427

00:29:07,769 --> 00:29:12,320

In the sense that we were talking about Nazism
and things before.

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00:29:12,320 --> 00:29:16,720

But on the other hand, they're on the forefront
of social change.

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00:29:16,720 --> 00:29:21,049

How are these views compatible?

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00:29:21,049 --> 00:29:25,870

Their participants are in the forefront of
social change.

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00:29:25,870 --> 00:29:31,320

The mainstream may be status quo and conservative,
which it is.

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00:29:31,320 --> 00:29:32,650

Take a look at student activism.

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00:29:32,650 --> 00:29:37,120

It's usually opposed by the administration and most of the faculty.

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00:29:37,120 --> 00:29:39,620

But nevertheless, it takes place.

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00:29:39,620 --> 00:29:43,169

Because this is a relatively free institution.

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00:29:43,169 --> 00:29:52,799

Which means that there are opportunities to break out of the doctrinaire system of attempted

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00:29:52,799 --> 00:29:54,720

regimentation.

438

00:29:54,720 --> 00:29:59,910

We're not living in totalitarian dictatorships where if you say the wrong thing, you get

439

00:29:59,910 --> 00:30:02,740

sent to the concentration camp.

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00:30:02,740 --> 00:30:08,320

We're living in societies with a relative degree of freedom.

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00:30:08,320 --> 00:30:12,370

Often infringed by authoritarian structures.

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00:30:12,370 --> 00:30:18,529

But they don't have the kind of force they do if the SS troops are standing behind you.

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00:30:18,529 --> 00:30:21,130

We shouldn't compare ourselves with that.

444

00:30:21,130 --> 00:30:27,289

In that case, what is an anarcho-syndicalist take on education?

445

00:30:27,289 --> 00:30:30,590

On what it should look like and what needs to change?

446

00:30:30,590 --> 00:30:34,450

From how it is now to how it should be.

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00:30:34,450 --> 00:30:40,480

Actually, the anarchist movement, not just the anarcho-syndicalists, were in the forefront

448

00:30:40,480 --> 00:30:41,919

of developing.

449

00:30:41,919 --> 00:30:43,240

Progressive education systems.

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00:30:43,240 --> 00:30:51,779

So for example, in Spain, where the 1936 revolution was the most successful.

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00:30:51,779 --> 00:30:54,560

So for example, of the anarchist revolution.

452

00:30:54,560 --> 00:31:02,480

That was preceded by decades of educational efforts in villages and towns everywhere.

453

00:31:02,480 --> 00:31:06,920

Trying to create a free, liberatory environment.

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00:31:06,920 --> 00:31:10,510

In which students could find their own ways.

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00:31:10,510 --> 00:31:12,309

Their creativity would be sponsored.

456

00:31:12,309 --> 00:31:14,490

They would work jointly with one another.

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00:31:14,490 --> 00:31:19,640

Very similar to progressive education tendencies of John Dewey and others.

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00:31:19,640 --> 00:31:23,019

Which I happened to benefit from as a child.

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00:31:23,019 --> 00:31:26,610

In fact, I'm familiar with and taught that way as well.

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00:31:26,610 --> 00:31:29,529

So yes, anarchist education has been very progressive.

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00:31:29,529 --> 00:31:35,850

There's also people like Paulo Freire who argued that it should be an interactive process.

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00:31:35,850 --> 00:31:38,600

Where the teacher is learning from the students.

463

00:31:38,600 --> 00:31:40,169

Not just students.

464

00:31:40,169 --> 00:31:42,980

Having an opportunity for freedom.

465

00:31:42,980 --> 00:31:49,179

That's what I think is the kind of direction that education should take.

466

00:31:49,179 --> 00:31:55,130

The course that it should follow and does
in the better places.

467

00:31:55,130 --> 00:32:04,470

Do you feel that if education is too centralized,
these alternative platforms will be sidelined?

468

00:32:04,470 --> 00:32:07,620

Neglected in the public sphere?

469

00:32:07,620 --> 00:32:16,460

Or for example, in universities that student
participation would get minimized?

470

00:32:16,460 --> 00:32:18,899

I don't think there's a simple answer.

471

00:32:18,899 --> 00:32:21,720

You could have a public education system.

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00:32:21,720 --> 00:32:29,789

Which fosters individual creativity, freedom,
student initiative and so on.

473

00:32:29,789 --> 00:32:33,419

You could have a scattered system of charter
schools.

474

00:32:33,419 --> 00:32:38,769

Which are business run and which impose discipline.

475

00:32:38,769 --> 00:32:40,530

It depends on the educational program.

476

00:32:40,530 --> 00:32:42,480

Not whether it's central or not.

477

00:32:42,480 --> 00:32:43,480

It depends.

478

00:32:43,480 --> 00:32:50,320

I have a question that either you would think is completely polar opposite or that they

479

00:32:50,320 --> 00:32:51,580

completely overlap.

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00:32:51,580 --> 00:32:55,419

What were you thinking during your interview, your conversation with Foucault?

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00:32:55,419 --> 00:33:00,059

And what were you thinking during your conversation with Ali G?

482

00:33:00,059 --> 00:33:01,059

With Ali G?

483

00:33:01,059 --> 00:33:02,059

I didn't hear the first one.

484

00:33:02,059 --> 00:33:03,970

With Foucault and with Ali G.

485

00:33:03,970 --> 00:33:06,630

Well, it's quite different.

486

00:33:06,630 --> 00:33:12,260

In the case of Ali G, I was not particularly interested in the interview.

487

00:33:12,260 --> 00:33:15,370

But I think it was the BBC or whoever was behind it.

488

00:33:15,370 --> 00:33:18,809

They gave me a big song and dance about it.

489

00:33:18,809 --> 00:33:21,840

It was going to be a very serious interview.

490

00:33:21,840 --> 00:33:22,840

So I finally agreed.

491

00:33:22,840 --> 00:33:26,340

As soon as he walked in, I realized this is a joke.

492

00:33:26,340 --> 00:33:28,470

I tried to be polite.

493

00:33:28,470 --> 00:33:29,919

I had a hard time with it.

494

00:33:29,919 --> 00:33:31,269

I didn't take it seriously enough.

495

00:33:31,269 --> 00:33:34,710

You mean to say you realized that it was a joke?

496

00:33:34,710 --> 00:33:39,210

Or you felt like the whole interview was a joke and you thought he was for real?

497

00:33:39,210 --> 00:33:45,139

The whole thing was obviously some kind of an efforted comedy, which I didn't want to

498

00:33:45,139 --> 00:33:46,139

be part of.

499

00:33:46,139 --> 00:33:50,980

And I was perfectly, I mean, I was on the tip of my tongue saying, look, this is enough.

500

00:33:50,980 --> 00:33:51,980

Let's terminate it.

501

00:33:51,980 --> 00:33:54,889

But being polite, I went along with it for a while.

502

00:33:54,889 --> 00:33:56,330

Foucault is quite different.

503

00:33:56,330 --> 00:34:01,309

Actually, we had spent, Foucault and I had spent a large part of the day together.

504

00:34:01,309 --> 00:34:03,500

The interview was in the evening.

505

00:34:03,500 --> 00:34:07,260

I was just walking around the Dutch countryside.

506

00:34:07,260 --> 00:34:12,899

Partly because we wanted to have a chance to talk, but partly to see if we could get

507

00:34:12,899 --> 00:34:16,929

by with him talking French and me talking English.

508

00:34:16,929 --> 00:34:19,889

Would we be able to understand each other?

509

00:34:19,889 --> 00:34:20,889

Or should we have a translator?

510

00:34:20,889 --> 00:34:23,750

We finally figured we could carry it off.

511

00:34:23,750 --> 00:34:25,609

I don't know much French.

512

00:34:25,609 --> 00:34:27,530

He doesn't know much English, but it worked.

513

00:34:27,530 --> 00:34:34,440

And the debate was about issues that are fairly serious issues.

514

00:34:34,440 --> 00:34:35,890

So nothing before archaeology.

515

00:34:35,890 --> 00:34:37,340

We disagreed about a lot of things.

516

00:34:37,340 --> 00:34:40,950

I was kind of appalled by some of his views.

517

00:34:40,950 --> 00:34:44,990

But it was within the domain of rational discourse.

518

00:34:44,990 --> 00:34:45,990

Okay.

519

00:34:45,990 --> 00:34:48,090

I know you're a busy person.

520

00:34:48,090 --> 00:34:52,079

I only have two more questions, and they're super quick.

521

00:34:52,079 --> 00:34:54,790

One is, what are your thoughts on postmodernism?

522

00:34:54,790 --> 00:34:57,260

What do you agree with and what do you disagree with?

523

00:34:57,260 --> 00:35:04,320

Well, for about a couple of decades, I've had a very simple question that I've been

524

00:35:04,320 --> 00:35:07,560

posing to my postmodern friends.

525

00:35:07,560 --> 00:35:17,970

Can you find something in postmodernism which is not either a triviality cloaked in polysyllables

526

00:35:17,970 --> 00:35:20,170

or is false?

527

00:35:20,170 --> 00:35:23,530

And nobody's answered it yet.

528

00:35:23,530 --> 00:35:26,280

So that's about all I can say.

529

00:35:26,280 --> 00:35:27,280

Okay.

530

00:35:27,280 --> 00:35:29,360

And then my last question was, you're extremely prolific.

531

00:35:29,360 --> 00:35:33,710

You've written, I think, over 100 books, at least on politics, and then many more on other

532

00:35:33,710 --> 00:35:34,710

subjects.

533

00:35:34,710 --> 00:35:36,230

How do you structure your day?

534

00:35:36,230 --> 00:35:38,670

What's your productivity look like?

535

00:35:38,670 --> 00:35:40,320

Your routine?

536

00:35:40,320 --> 00:35:47,650

Well, right now, since my wife Valeria and I moved to Arizona, not living in Cambridge

537

00:35:47,650 --> 00:35:53,790

anymore, my routine is to get up early in the morning, take our dogs out, play with

538

00:35:53,790 --> 00:35:55,470

them for a while.

539

00:35:55,470 --> 00:36:00,530

Then read the newspaper and start looking at the huge quantity of email that piled up.

540

00:36:00,530 --> 00:36:04,760

If I can get rid of that, get to work on serious things.

541

00:36:04,760 --> 00:36:07,369

Ah, but did you clean your room?

542

00:36:07,369 --> 00:36:08,650

I'm just kidding.

543

00:36:08,650 --> 00:36:12,710

I said, ah, but did you clean your room?

544

00:36:12,710 --> 00:36:14,240

Clean my room?

545

00:36:14,240 --> 00:36:16,470

Jordan Peterson reference.

546

00:36:16,470 --> 00:36:19,650

There's very little oxygen in the room.

547

00:36:19,650 --> 00:36:21,330

It's mostly books and papers.

548

00:36:21,330 --> 00:36:24,470

It's not much clean.

549

00:36:24,470 --> 00:36:26,890

Thank you so much, Professor, and thank you.

550

00:36:26,890 --> 00:36:28,270

What's your wife's name?

551

00:36:28,270 --> 00:36:29,270

Valeria?

552

00:36:32,270 --> 00:36:30,270

Valeria.

553

00:36:34,270 --> 00:36:33,270

Hi.

554

00:36:34,270 --> 00:36:36,280

Thank you so much.

555

00:36:36,280 --> 00:36:38,130

Thank you.

556

00:36:38,130 --> 00:36:41,599

I'll send you a link to this interview as well.

557

00:36:41,599 --> 00:36:43,319

I'll give you a copy of the interview.

558

00:36:43,319 --> 00:36:44,319

Sure.