Episode 1,148: The Totalitarian Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Guest: Gerard Casey

WOODS: It's fun to talk about somebody as evil as Rousseau, especially because he's not always portrayed that way. He was an idealist. He was this or that. Whatever he is, he's never presented quite the right way. And there are so many works we can talk about. And I don't mean like 807, but I mean he has works, each of which are significant. I mean, a solid at least five major works that we could discuss that have been influential, people have commented on for a long time.

What about the personal life of Rousseau? There's a book by Paul Johnson called *Intellectuals*, where he goes through — I don't remember if Rousseau is in that book. It's primarily 20th century intellectuals. And he goes through the personal biographies of each of these people and suggests that, just maybe, aspects of their personal lives and their personal failings just so happen to appear to seep into their political thought in their published work. And I wonder if that may be true — I mean, look, I wouldn't want to be judged in this way by future generations, but look, if I did as much damage as Rousseau has done, I think I would say: hey, it's only fair to do what you have to do in analyzing me. So maybe even looking at *The Confessions* might be an interesting place to start.

CASEY: Yeah, he's an extraordinary character. I mean, I think I make the point that there are some thinkers whose personal lives don't impact on their thoughts at all. I mean, you know nothing about them and really you don't need to know anything about them. And there are other thinkers like Saint Augustine, for example, who, if he's writing, you know what he had for breakfast. He's that kind of character. And Rousseau is one of these people whose writings are to some extent an exteriorization of what he's feeling, what he's thinking, and especially why he's not getting the appreciation he thinks he deserves.

I would suspect if you were to make a list of the least likable people in the world of authorship and political philosophy and so on, Rousseau is either at or very close to the top. He had this unerring capacity for alienating almost everybody, including David Hume, who among the philosophers was a really remarkably charitable character and tried to befriend Rousseau, but paid the penalty for it because Rousseau just stabbed him in the back, as it were. So he is an immensely dislikable character.

Now, you might say: but that doesn't really matter; who cares? I mean, likable, dislikable, what we need to look at are his writings. But unfortunately in Rousseau's case, as I just said, what he's writing about really is coming out form his insides. So his character affects what he does.

WOODS: You mention something about Rousseau that we might apply to a great many other thinkers, that he is very profoundly interested in and affected by the affairs and ups and downs of mankind in general, but not so much by the individual — you know, he's not so concerned about the particular individuals for whom he may have some special connection.

CASEY: Yeah, see, he has again — it's one of these things. I'm sure many people among your listeners will be aware of this. There are people in the world of politics and political affairs who seem to have this incredible love of humanity that never manages to manifest itself in the love of any particular human being, and in fact, it seems very often to be consistent with, at least in their eyes, at least a sort of radical dislike. So Rousseau's one of these people who seem to have this incredible capacity to love human beings in the round but never any particular human being. And in fact, in his personal relations, managed as I said already to alienate almost everybody who had any dealings with him. He was profoundly ungrateful and self-centered, narcissistic and self-pitying, and had a whole host of personal unpleasant characteristics. An unfortunate character. As I say in my book, not the kind of guy you would want to take out for a drink.

WOODS: Yeah, no kidding. Okay, now what kind of things do we learn in his *Confessions*, and how would you compare them to the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine?

CASEY: Well, I suppose the only thing they have in common is that they did actually both write confessions.

WOODS: [laughing] Yeah.

CASEY: But apart from that, Rousseau really is a large-scale exercise in exculpation. In other words, he's telling us why he's so wonderful, why appreciated, and why everybody else is not as wonderful as he is. I know that sounds really sort of sweeping, but that's essentially it. I mean, somebody remarks that confessions and autobiographies are generally unreliable, and that may well be true, but I suspect that Rousseau's one is spectacularly unreliable. But even at that, it does reveal something of his character, and he was immensely self-centered. We all are I suppose to some extent, but massively is so in the case of Rousseau.

WOODS: So what is the value — if we want to understand Rousseau, what's the value to reading this work?

CASEY: Well, I would say let's take a specific example. Rousseau was, as quite a few people were at the particular time, interested in education and the upbringing of children, which is a perfectly respectable enterprise and there's nothing wrong in writing about that, except that in his own personal life, he managed to have five children for whom he provided no support whatsoever and nothing by way of education. I think again most of your listeners will really appreciate that if you want to know what somebody is like, don't ask them to tell you what they think and what their principles are, but actually observe what they do. And so Rousseau was a spectacular failure as a father, except in actually producing his progeny. He effectively abandoned them to an orphanage, which had a 66% sort of death rate in the first or second year, and then had the cheek to suggest that he did this for their welfare and not simply because he was too mean to actually provide for their welfare, as he should have done.

WOODS: All right, let's go on. Of course everybody wants to talk — at least by "everybody" I mean me. I want to talk about The Social Contract eventually. But let's talk about *The First and Second Discourses*, because here we can easily overlook these in our race to get to *The Social Contract*, and there's a lot to talk about here. *The First Discourse*, I'm trying to think back to my graduate school or even actually undergrad days. This was an entry into some kind of contest about the way that the sciences and whatever else have advanced civilization, and he suggested that it was actually quite the opposite?

CASEY: Yeah, it was an entry in a competition, and clearly, the organizers of the competition were expecting people to say this is how we've progressed in this particular way or in that particular way. And Rousseau, to give him credit, Rousseau took the contrarian view and said: no, no, no. In fact, it's actually gone the other way around. The sciences and philosophy and all of these things are actually an indication of the extent to which human beings have deteriorated from some kind of original, sort of innocent condition. And I think it was the sheer shock of having somebody take this contrarian view that got him the prize.

Others have remarked, including Paul Johnson whom you mentioned earlier, that *The First Discourse* when you read it now seems in John's words to be feeble and paltry, and another writer called Robert Whelan has remarked that in fact it's largely plagiarized from Montaigne's essay on the cannibals published about 150 or 170 years before Rousseau wrote his piece. I actually haven't verified this myself, so we'll have to go on what Whelan said here. But yes, it's a very strange sort of discourse.

It's primarily *The First Discourse* which gives us the idea, the very common idea that — Rousseau had this idea of the noble savage, the idea that original man was sort of incredibly noble and to be contrasted with the degraded and frayed condition of mankind in later ages. That's not quite accurate.

WOODS: I hadn't heard that accusation of plagiarism. Now I'm interested. I want to go take a look, although it's kind of an odd use of my time, but for some reason, I feel compelled to take a look at it. Well, *The Second Discourse* I think is the one that's generated more discussion, because there are not that many people I think who would really follow his argument — I don't mean would understand it, but who really would follow along with him and would come out on the other side agreeing with him. But with *The Second Discourse*, when he's talking about inequality and property, well, here he does have obviously for — I was going to say for good or for ill, but obviously entirely for ill, people who agree with him on where the roots of human inequality come from. So let's turn out attention to that. What is his conclusion in looking at this question?

CASEY: Well, his conclusion is that man in a state of nature — and of course the idea of the state of nature is a common trope among philosophers of this period — is really an innocent being. Now, it's hard to describe what he would be. For example, if you contrast him with Hobbes, okay, for Hobbes, human beings in the state of nature were in sort of a Darwinian condition, sort of nature red in tooth and claw, fighting one another and struggling and so on. Rousseau's idea is that they were in some kind of pre-edenic condition. They sort of, I don't know, sort of ambled around like some sort of gentle ape who's kind of picking fruit off the tree and so on. It's hard even to recognize Rousseau's idea of a human being as indeed human beings. In my book, I comment that they were rather like chimpanzees that had been strategically shaved and dressed in a suit.

And it's not even so much that they were sort of initially good; it's that they were sort of pre-moral. Just as, for example, we don't think of dogs as being moral beings. If a dog bites you, you may initially get angry with him, but you're not angry with him in the way you would be if a human being had bit you, and you certainly wouldn't reproach him for doing it. It doesn't make sense to address a dog and say, "You know, you really shouldn't go around biting people." So human beings in Rousseau's view in their initial condition were a bit like sort of dogs and cats and other non-rational animals. They didn't really have any kind of moral position. And somehow, something went wrong.

And here's the interesting story. What's the villain in the piece? What's the snake in Rousseau's Garden of Eden? And the answer is: agriculture [laughing]. You go, what? Agriculture. Yeah, it was the agricultural revolution which disturbed this sort of edenic condition and led to all the inequalities and nastiness which we now see in the world around us. And just in case you think this is some sort of mad idea which sort of originated and then died with Rousseau, of course it's become commonplace, and indeed, we've seen it recently — I don't know if your listeners are familiar with the book by Yuval Harari, the Israeli author, called *Sapiens*. He makes very much the same point. They think that the agricultural revolution was a really, really bad idea and that things were pretty good up to then and that's when mankind really went downhill.

WOODS: Well, let's talk a bit about property, because I'm virtually certain Rousseau was the guy who said something like the first person to — I'm going to butcher it, but it's something along the lines of the first person to stand on a plot of land and say, "This is mine," is responsible for all the butcheries and crimes of man against man that have ensued ever since. That is Rousseau, isn't it?

CASEY: It is Rousseau. That's the guy, and that's very much the claim. Basically he thinks with the advent of agriculture and the longer timespan that we need for the use of natural resources, then possession becomes longer and longer, and this in fact gives rise to property and that then gives rise to conflict and the war of all against all. Now we're in a Hobbesian position from which men desiring to escape, then they agree and this is Rousseau's really key point, that in agreeing to this notion of property in the in the interest of security, the mass of humankind is in fact fooled into accepting an inferior position.

WOODS: What can we say about this conclusion about property? What does he envision, first of all, as what would replace the institution of property?

CASEY: Well, interestingly enough, he doesn't think it's possible to go back. In other words, one thing he's not saying is let's go back to that awful time and put the time machine into reverse and go back. He realizes that there is no possibility of going back. Quite what he has in mind is not absolutely clear, because one of the points I make in my chapter on this in my book is that Rousseau I think is inconsistent, or at least at the very least if he's inconsistent, is unclear. It's very difficult to figure out exactly quite what he has in mind here except that he's not happy. And like many people who are not happy, it's not easy to figure out quite what the source of this unhappiness is.

Again, part of it, this is where we come back to the personal, because Rousseau personally was first of all — we think of him as being French, but of course Rousseau was in fact Swiss and a citizen of Geneva, which was a very small and compact town. And then he found himself at large in French society. And he would not have been a member of the aristocracy

in any sense. He would have been under the lower bourgeoisie, and so he found himself not really accepted except as a kind of performing bear. In other words, because of his writings, he was tolerated and he found that very difficult to accept. Also interestingly enough, for him his model of what society would be like if it was properly ordered was really based on his hometown of Geneva and, at a slightly larger remove, with the Ancient Greek cities. This was his ideal of how society should be organized.

One thing in his favor from the point of view of a libertarian was he rejected completely the idea of representative democracy, simply because there was no way in a very large state, for example, this could actually give effect to what people really wanted in any way. It would simply be a way of simply installing, I don't know, some kind of effectively tyranny masked by sort of pseudo-democratic forms.

WOODS: Yeah, that is an interesting thing about Rousseau, that he's one of a very, very small number of modern thinkers who are expressly not speaking about a system that he thinks is applicable across a large expanse.

CASEY: Yes, that indeed. So I mean, it's easy to dislike Rousseau and to reject what he says, and I do dislike him and I do reject most of what he says, but there are parts of his thinking where he actually manages, accidentally or otherwise, to hit on something I think that's correct or true. So the idea of the sort of large-scale modern state, which had been only in existence in his time for roughly only about a century or maybe 150 years, was not something that he found appealing and not a situation in which human beings could have any of the various kind of freedoms that he thought they should have.

WOODS: All right, I want to turn now, if I may, to *The Social Contract*, which is such an important work of his. Even if it wasn't read so much in his own day, it's had tremendous influence down the couple of hundred years since it was written. So let's do that after we thank our sponsor.

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All right, when you talk about *The Social Contract*, there are a number of ideas in there that need to be explained, the general will perhaps chief among them. But before getting to those, try and explain what is the difference between social contract, so-called, as Rousseau understands it and other forms of social contract thinking that we see in thinkers who preceded him.

CASEY: Yeah, that's really a very good question. I wish I had a sort of snappy answer to that one. I don't. One thing I think at least is clear, that sometimes when people talk about social contract theory, there are two broad ways of understanding this. One is that somehow people got together at a particular time in the past, sat down, and had an agreement, which then is a source of the political order from then on. Rousseau doesn't think that. He doesn't think — whatever the social contract is for Rousseau, it's not an historical event. Really, the social contract for him — and I think I'm correct in saying this, but again, I have to make the point that it's really difficult to be certain about anything in Rousseau. I think I'm correct in saying that, for him, the social contract is to be understood, as it were, sort of counterfactually.

When we look at society and the way in which it is organized right now, we, as it were, by participating and being a member of society, we have virtually contracted, even though we have actually never sat down and have never been asked and have never signed a piece of paper. So it's something like that. If we were to think of it in modern terms, it would be something like you would get in the writings of, say, John Rawls, where sort of behind a veil of ignorance people would choose an order in which no one would be massively advantaged and no one would be massively disadvantaged. Of course we never find ourselves behind a veil of ignorance. This is a sort of hypothetical construction. So to that extent, Rousseau's social contract, the idea of contract here is really I think a hypothetical entity rather than an actual entity.

WOODS: All right, well, let's think about what John Locke would have had to say about the relationship between the individual and the state. He would have thought of it as a situation in which people come to some rational understanding that they're all better off if they delegate some of the powers that they enjoy, he would say precariously in the state of nature, to a central authority so that they may enjoy the remainder of their rights more securely. But I don't believe that's the way Rousseau thinks about what's happening at all, because at least in Locke's formulation, even if he doesn't seem to think — he doesn't talk about secession. He does talk about revolution a bit, but at the very least, you still get the idea in Locke that the powers begin with the individual. The individual delegates a number of them, a small number of them, but is still kind of the one in charge and reserves to himself a lot of powers. The sense that you get from Rousseau is: the individual is involved in a relationship with the government in which he's all in. Like he's relinquished all of this stuff, and now it's up to the state to distribute back what it chooses.

CASEY: Yes, I think that's largely correct. I would say that for the mature Rousseau — now, I mean, people have argued that when you go through the various writings, his position is moving, and that may well be the case. But for the mature Rousseau, it's clear enough I think that the collectivity comes first and that the individual is a distant second. And once again, I think you can understand what's going on here if you see that Rousseau's model is immediately the city-state of Geneva, but more importantly for him, the city-states of Ancient Greece, where this was exactly the case, where people were citizens first and individuals, if they were anything at all, a long ways second. So for him, anything that an individual has of value, his desire for happiness or a language, all of these come from society. They're all, as it were, given to him from the collectivity. So clearly this is nothing like what you get, say, from Locke, where the individual has rights, has property, and then makes various concessions in order to provide security for his tenure of that property. That's not at all what you're getting in Rousseau.

WOODS: Now let's introduce the concept of the general will to help bring everything into — I was going to say clear focus, but, ha ha. But I am interested in this idea of the general will, because of course this has been used, and indeed it's begging to be used in a totalitarian manner.

CASEY: Yeah, this is — what can I say? It's an extraordinary notion in some ways. Who was it? George Sorel said that Rousseau was unintelligible, but his unintelligibility didn't matter and that the idea of the general will wasn't to be taken seriously. In other words — sorry, it wasn't so much that it wasn't to be taken seriously that it was beside the point to understand it. I think that what's going on here, again, if we try to grasp what's going on, it's something like this. The general will, first of all, what it isn't: it isn't something that you arrive at by

counting heads. So let's suppose we have 1,000 people in our state, so we issue a questionnaire and 999 people want something, so that is the general will. Now, that's not at all what Rousseau has in mind. The general will isn't actually the will of an individual citizen and it isn't even the will of the majority. It's sort of counterfactual. The general will is what everybody would in fact will if they were to abstract from their individual biases and concerns. So it's not actually anything factual in that sense. So somebody has to know what that is, and it may or not actually coincide with the desires of an individual or a group of individuals or even the majority, but there's no necessity. It's perfectly possible in Rousseau's thinking for the general will to be something very different from what the majority actually wants.

WOODS: Then the question obviously becomes: who then is able to divine what the general will is? That's such a fundamental question that I fear that Rousseau scholars out there would be tut-tutting me for having such an elementary question. But pardon my impertinence here. It's betting to be asked.

CASEY: Well, exactly. So how do we know what this is? Do you look into your hearts? Do you consult the oracles? What do you do? How is one to know what the general will is? I mean, those of us who've been around, whatever misgivings we might have about representative democracies, we understand how it's supposed to work. In other words, it's supposed to be some kind of majoritarian way of organizing things. But this is not the way the general will works at all.

So in fact, to try to answer your question, Rousseau actually introduces another perplexing notion, and this is the idea of the legislator. Not a legislature, but the legislator, who is one person, whose task is to bring about the conformity of the diverse wills and to produce and clarify what the general will is. Now, you might say: great, that's terrific. How does that get us out of our problem? And then the answer is: it doesn't. Because if the idea of the general will is obscure, and it is, then the idea of the legislator is scarcely less obscure. You really are explaining the obscure by the even more obscure.

And here's, by the way, what the legislator will do, and this is to connect up with your remark about totalitarianism. The legislator, his job is to persuade people to obey the laws but not by argument, for arguments would be too abstruse. The people, you see, aren't amenable to reason, so they must be persuaded by some other means, and that's the legislator's job. Now, if that sends a shiver down your spine as it does, there's a reason for it, because of course we saw how this worked in the first third of the 20th century. In this case, the legislator was der Führer and so on. So this notion sort of really worries me. I mean, as I said, it's hard to read such a passage now without being reminded of national socialism, fascism, and indeed, bolshevism. And indeed, in the case of the USA, certain activities of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who, in addressing Congress, challenged them that if they weren't prepared to take on the job he thought they should do, he was quite prepared to do it by himself.

WOODS: Now again, I feel compelled to ask a fundamental question, and it's just the kind of question that would occur to anybody hearing this for the first time. It seems to be the case that, you're right, that the general will is, to the extent — I don't know how we figure out what it is in a particular case, but the idea of it is we strip away all the private wills, all the private interests that might be tainting your ability to view things from a bird's-eye, dispassionate, disinterested perspective, and once we clear away these private interests, we're getting closer and closer to what the general will would be. But this idea that the

legislator would have special insights obviously suggests that the legislator is some kind of special individual with whom we do not have to worry about peeling away private interests. But okay, this is silly and superstitious to believe this. Even if there were such people, how do we know we could identify them? Who would be doing the identifying? Well, a bunch of people who apparently are loaded down with private interests. How would they choose this particular person? I mean, does it seem like — it seems to me you're just overwhelmed with logical objections here.

CASEY: Well, not only logical objections, but practical ones. And again, if I were to stand up and say to the Irish people, "I will be your legislator. I will discern for you the general will and tell you what it is," and the rude answer would be, "Well, who are you and where do you get these magic powers from and how are you in touch with the divine here and how can you reveal?" And the answer is: I would have no answer to that. And so it's an immensely practical problem.

And of course, it doesn't explain and help to explain the general will at all. It just introduces another level of complexity and another level of obscurity. In fact —

WOODS: Well, what problem — Okay, no, go ahead, but I want to follow this up with what problem Rousseau thinks he's solving by writing *The Social Contract*. But I don't want to interrupt, even though I just did, but just put that in the back of your mind. That's what's coming.

CASEY: Okay, there's something here which I think is really relevant in today's society, particularly in the context of current events that are exciting us socially and politically, and that's the whole idea of false consciousness. And of course, this notion of false consciousness has had a lot of meanings, and it comes up in various ways, but the basic idea is in Rousseau, remember the people weren't capable of being persuaded. They weren't capable of responding to reason. And in that case, you're treating individuals as if they were children. Now, it's perfectly appropriate to treat children as if they're children, but not adults.

So the idea behind false consciousness is that somehow I or my group, we're the enlightened ones and we know what's really good for you. You, on the other hand, don't, and therefore even though you express your desires for A, B, or C, we have to tell you unfortunately that A, B, and C won't really make you happy, aren't for your good, and therefore, you are prey to false consciousness, but we somehow magically and mysteriously are not. Now, this I think is simply another version of the legislator, except that there are more people involved here.

And of course you see this all the time. You find it, for example, in radical feminism. For example, women might say" we don't think of men as the enemy and we don't have a problem with many of these things and we're reasonably happy. And they will be told by the radical feminists: well, unfortunately, that's false consciousness. You simply have been indoctrinated in various ways and you don't really know what's good for you, but we somehow do and we will therefore tell you and so on, and the fact that you expostulate and say, "But no, really, this is what we want," we will pay absolutely no attention to you. And this of course is a deadly notion, because this creates the notion of some group of experts, whoever they might be — and it's not just in radical feminism. It can be in any area — who, as it were, like the legislator, have the capacity to know what's really good for people as distinct from the plebs like us, who don't.

WOODS: All right, so let's get back to that other question I was asking you. What's the point of the book? What problem is he solving in his mind?

CASEY: Well, the problem that I think — okay, the basic problem here is the basic problem with any political order, which is this: some people tell you what you must do and have the power to enforce it, and other people are being told what to do and can be forced to do it whether they want to or not. That looks like we have a two-tier structure. We have the commanders and the obeyers. And as long as you have that structure, the question always arises: why should those — apart from the threat of force, why should those people who are told that they must obey, what reason do they have apart from the threat of force if they don't for obeying the commands of their alleged superiors? And so that's your basic problem. If, however — and this is the key. If, however, you can persuade the mass of the obeyers that what they're being told to do is really an expression of their own will properly understood, then the gap disappears.

WOODS: That's exactly it. That is exactly it. That way, it doesn't — because I think the whole — his relationship with the Enlightenment is interesting, but I think the whole Enlightenment is very uncomfortable with the idea of some people exercising authority over others. And so I think that's partly where the whole social contract stuff comes from, is so that we can get at least implicit consent out of this, tacit consent, so that we can say: look, it really is you who are governing you. It's not really some external force governing you, because we all know that's barbaric and from the olden, benighted days. But no, it's you governing you. And so this is Rousseau's own ways of explaining how it could be that you're governing you, even though it's obviously somebody else telling you to do something you have no desire to do.

CASEY: Yes, exactly. It looks like tyranny, it looks like force and so on, but as he notoriously said, you must be forced to be free. You might say as you protest, I don't really want to do this or I'd prefer to do something else, and again, in this kind of paternalistic fashion, you're being told, no, but this is really what you - if you only knew what the general will is, if you only weren't prey to false consciousness, you would realize that what we are now unfortunately forcing you to do is in fact for your own best interest and something that you would really want to do if you only could, as it were, tap in to this sort of general will. And it's an ingenious idea, right, because if you buy in to that way of thinking, then you've wiped out the basic problem of politics, which is: why should some people rule and why should some people obey? But unfortunately, I think most of us suspect that we're being sold a pig in a poke here, that this is not perhaps as obviously correct as it might be.

And of course, if you're on the commanding side, if what those who claim to know the general will or to be in possession of a true consciousness, if what they are proposing is in line with what you want, then of course you don't feel it as an imposition. If people are forcing you to do things that you would want to do anyway, than they don't really have to force you, do they? You would do them in any case. It's only when there's a discrepancy, a disparity between what it is that you want to do and what other people are now forcing you to do that you will feel that there's something wrong about this. But then you will be told: no, no, no. It looks like this is some kind of coercion and so on, but really, we are just giving expression to the general will, to what is in fact your own will, even though you don't know it.

WOODS: Finally, can you just say a word about what Rousseau's views on religion are, but primarily how they fit into the political order?

CASEY: Oh, well, now this is one area where I really think he goes back to Plato. Plato in his dialogue *The Laws* had an almost identical view of religion, which is to see it as a tool, as an instrument, as it were, of social control. Forget that it might have any possible relationship to a transcendent reality, but here the civic religion would provide some kind of quasi-religious grounding for the social order, and people would be in fact forced again to subscribe to this. Because of that, of course, he was radically opposed to Christianity, because of course Christianity, even when the Church is conforming with the state in many ways, there's always a possibility, always a danger that at some stage, they might actually remember what they're supposed to be doing and provide a counterpoint, as in Romans Chapter 12 where it says, "Be not conformed to the world." There's always a danger that that Christian religion might not be conformed to the world.

And in fact, he writes to Voltaire in 1756; he says, "There can exist religions that attack the foundations of society" — which is clearly Christianity. And then he goes on to say: "And one has to begin" — wait for it — "by exterminating these religions in order to ensure the peace of the state." And of course, what do we witness in the subsequent centuries except attempts to exterminate religion because of the possible dangers that they pose to the state.

WOODS: Well, that is a good place to stop and sum up here. What would be, if you had a minute to explain it, what would be your summary of your case for what makes, as you say in your book, the thought of Rousseau both authoritarian and totalitarian?

CASEY: Well, like many authors, especially because he's unclear in many ways, he has been taken to be the source of various political ideas. But I believe that he really was, even if he didn't intend to be — and maybe he did; maybe he didn't — he was actually a proto-totalitarian. And to that extent, I think he really has to be seen as the sort of political godfather of the politics of the 20th century, and let's hope that he will not be the godfather of the politics of the 21st century.

WOODS: Well, with that, we will wrap this up today, but I want to remember to urge people to pick up your book. Now, tell people the full title again.

CASEY: It's called *Freedom's Progress?*

WOODS: And the subtitle is?

CASEY: Is *A History of Political Philosophy*.

WOODS: Okay, so this is the book that we've done a number of episodes talking about different sections of it. The material on Rousseau is quite copious and very, very good, but the whole thing is just an amazing treatment. And you have to remember it'll be a little more expensive than your average book, but that's because it's about eight times larger than your average book, and you're going to be getting about 12 times the knowledge from a typical book. So think of that. Factor that into your purchase decision. We will link to the book of course at TomWoods.com/1148. Professor Casey, thanks again for your time. Always a pleasure.

CASEY: Thank you very much, Tom.