



## Episode 1,746: Can Anarchism and Conservatism Teach Each Other

Guest: Dan McCarthy

**WOODS:** I thought your article was very interesting, and it raises issues that I've thought about quite a bit. But it also gave me an opportunity to pick your brain a bit, because, you know, we talk every once in a while, but I don't see you that much. I think the last time we had a meal together was like years and years ago at this point, so I haven't really tracked the full evolution of your thinking over time. And I think it has changed from that first time I met you when we were both real youngsters at the Mises Institute. I think you're a somewhat different Dan McCarthy now than you were then. So let's start first with your Twitter handle, because you do actually talk a little bit about this in the article. What's the origin of the thinking behind @ToryAnarchist as your as your handle?

**MCCARTHY:** I wanted a handle that was not easy to pin down as sort of conventionally conservative, especially in a way that people might think was neoconservative. Because I picked this Twitter handle back in the 2000s, back during the Bush era, and so I was worried about that. I didn't want something that was so ordinarily conservative that it would sound like I could be misidentified as being aligned with the neocons or something like that. But I also wanted something that indicated some degree of interest in liberty, and anarchism certainly does that. So my Twitter handle is @ToryAnarchist, which combines these sort of paradoxical elements, Tory and anarchist, in a way that hopefully signals that my Twitter handle and my Twitter account is going to be somewhat interesting and a little bit unexpected and paradoxical.

**WOODS:** Now, is it safe to say that over the course of your life – even if you're maybe let's say some of the emphases in the way you think might have changed – would you say that you've always been, for lack of a better term, some kind of a Buchananite in one way or another?

**MCCARTHY:** Yes, I think that's exactly right. It was an interest in Pat Buchanan and the style of politics that he represented, the thought that he represented, paleoconservatism, that really got me interested in politics in the first place in the early 1990s. And I've always had my own sort of take on Buchananism. I don't follow Mr. Buchanan in lockstep or anything like that. But in general, his thought is sort of one of the major points of sort of orientation and my thinking.

**WOODS:** If I may just say something parenthetically, I think a lot of his columns are intended to be memos to Trump. It's not particularly subtle. I think he is trying to convey certain things, and I think Trump and Buchanan, there was some bad blood between them years ago, but now I think Trump sees the picture a bit more clearly as to who's on what side, and I think

they've more or less reconciled. But he would do well to listen to Pat, and I think he could have avoided some of the political missteps he's made if he'd listened to a guy who really is a master of it, namely Pat himself. I assume you agree with that?

**MCCARTHY:** Well, that's true. The bad blood it had to do with a situation in 2000, where Pat Buchanan was running for the Reform Party nomination, and Donald Trump put out the idea that he might run for the nomination himself. He didn't wind up doing so, but he kind of suggested that he might in such a way that it created a significant inconvenience for Pat Buchanan. And then he also had various disparaging remarks about Mr. Buchanan at that time, as well. And all of that had actually been engineered by a political consultant who was working for Donald Trump at the time. It was not coming from Trump himself, or at least he wasn't the origin of that thinking. It was actually a consultant who later went on to become a John McCain consultant in 2008. So I kind of know a bit of the backstory there, and I know that it didn't really reflect Donald Trump's thinking even at the time.

**WOODS:** I seem to recall a photo – there was no enthusiasm for a Trump candidacy at that time, and Trump had some kind of event related to it, and it was so sparsely attended, it was a bunch of mostly empty chairs. And maybe I'm misremembering this, but I could have sworn either Pat or one of his people, we didn't have Twitter at that time, but publicized that photo along the lines of: how's that campaign enthusiasm dialing up there for you, Donald? So anyway, I'm glad this is all in the past.

But so now what I want to know is, my thought just in talking to you over the years was that you were, as I've been – I'm very interested in what Pat has to say. And his book on World War II is far more gutsy than what 90% of libertarians would ever dare to say. I mean, yeah, they're going to lecture him on tariffs all day long, but *The New York Times* isn't going to attack you for being against tariffs so. So I'm very interested in him also. But would you say that you've become less libertarian over the years? I mean, just a quick yes or no, would you say that's true?

**MCCARTHY:** Not exactly, no.

**WOODS:** Oh, okay. All right, okay, sorry. In that case, I don't want to quick yes or no. Then then let's say this. How would you say the Dan McCarthy of 2020 is different from the Dan McCarthy of let's say, 2000?

**MCCARTHY:** Chiefly, it's a different issue environment. So even back in 2000, my thought was it was kind of a better economic system that we had, a better tax system that we had in the 19th century, where instead of having an income tax that was directly not only taking money out of people's pockets, but also involving people in kind of government monitoring of their incomes that is quite objectionable from a libertarian standpoint even apart from the revenue that's being taken away – I think rather than having that, having a revenue tariff made a lot of sense. And so I've always had a kind of – I think there's a libertarian case to be made for tariffs as an alternative to a lot of the taxes that we have at present.

Now, my interest in tariffs extends to the Buchananite interest in tariffs, which is sort of a degree of protectionism or at least a degree of leveling the field compared to other states that may be subsidizing their industries. But I've always had a kind of nuanced view of that.

And of course, as many of your listeners might know, back in the 1990s Ron Paul and Lew Rockwell and others and Murray Rothbard were very critical of NAFTA, because NAFTA of course is a form of managed trade, and not really a form of pure free trade. So some of my criticisms of free trade, while they do apply to free trade even in the absolute, they apply much more to the kind of managed trade that actually creates winners and losers as determined by sort of the negotiators of the treaties, as opposed to even the sort of distorted market that you get from competing with communist states that might be subsidizing their industries.

**WOODS:** Well, obviously over the years – and I'm kind of using your article as a springboard for these questions – you've had very cordial relations with people who are very radical libertarians and who follow in the footsteps of Murray Rothbard, namely me among them. And I guess I'd like to know, what do you think – I mean, I know that you see the persuasiveness of a lot of what we say, and you agree with a lot of what we say. What do you think we're missing? What are we not seeing or not emphasizing enough?

**MCCARTHY:** Well, it does come down to a question of human nature. And it's not that libertarians like yourself have a kind of Rousseauistic, sunny view of human nature. But human ambition is something which is hard to channel in a productive way through any kind of institutional set of arrangements. And a perfect set of institutional arrangements may actually have a harder time dealing with unruly human ambition than imperfect kinds of arrangements. So the state winds up being something that almost always is a channel of human ambition. It's very hard to get away from and to eradicate.

So the question is, instead of trying to have a perfect system that would get away from any kind of coercion, can you take a system that is imperfect and make it at least tolerable? And I think that's kind of the practical aim that I would have in thinking about politics, as opposed to looking towards what might be sort of a one-ideal system, which could be something described as a kind of anarchy, whether anarchocapitalism or kind of anarchocommunitarianism, which might be ideal in a sort of pure moral sense, but is very hard to actually bring about, if not impossible to bring about, given the way that the human psyche actually works.

**WOODS:** Well, here's my concern about that. When I think about the kind of person who succeeds in the current political system, it's not generally a Pat Buchanan or a Ron Paul. It is the most loathsome type of person imaginable, indeed with great ambition. And it seems to me that a system like this tends to favor the most ruthless, unscrupulous sort of person and is not particularly the kind of arena in which people like you and me or people who share the concerns of you and me tend to succeed. So we're playing on a field that's stacked against us, because we're just not programmed to act this way or speak this way or be demagogues. We're just not cut out for it. We're not cut out for the cutthroat, ruthless nature of it, the amorality of it. That's just not suited to a conservative temperament.

And so that's one of the reasons that I want to try to minimize the extent to which life is controlled by politics or the politicization of life, because even if there weren't a moral problem with that or just on practical grounds, we're not going to win. See what I mean? So I mean, that's my concern about that.

**MCCARTHY:** Well, I agree, and my article actually talks about that somewhat, talks about how someone like Robert Nisbet, for example, analyzed the effect that statism has upon the

family, for example, and upon sort of civil society. And you used a word that I think is the right way of looking at this, which is *minimize*. You do want to minimize the amount of power and sway that these bad people in politics have over all of our different walks of life. But that said, *minimize* doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to get to a perfect, sort of no-power-whatsoever kind of circumstance.

The other thing, too, is that in trying to aim for perfection, you can make things rather worse sometimes. And that's sometimes what would happen if you tried to take an imperfect system, aim for something better, and wind up getting what in fact winds up sort of being more easily overpowered or manipulated by people of great ambition and low moral character. So the problem isn't that if you got to the kind of world order that you'd like to see, you'd have something that would be bad; it's rather that in trying to improve upon something that's pretty flawed right now, would you actually get to a worse kind of statism as a result of just the way people are right now and the kind of limits of their thinking and the limits of their ability to get away from the dependency that's been created in people?

**WOODS:** I'm going to read a paragraph from this article that really cut me to the quick here, because it is something that I think about a lot, and I'm not even convinced by my own arguments, if I'm being honest with you. And you write this:

"This new moral dictatorship is so far mostly enforced through private authority" –

And by the way, you talk about this moral dictatorship. We all know what you mean there, that there are certain opinions everybody's expected to hold, all right-thinking people – we all know what you're talking about.

– "is so far mostly enforced through private authority by corporations, Twitter mobs, and vigilante activists, who trawl through 18-year-olds' social media history for evidence of blasphemies that might be grounds for getting their college admissions revoked. A classical liberal might lament all this, but believing as he does that private institutions are free to be as repressive as they like as long as no coercion by the state is involved, the only remedies he is prepared to entertain are along the lines of consumer complaints. He is going to politely ask that private institutions stop demanding conformity to theocratic progressivism, and he may even stop buying some products if Facebook or Amazon or Google does not behave more nicely. He will stop donating to Harvard University if his alma mater does not respect academic freedom, and Harvard's \$40 billion endowment will surely suffer for the loss of those thousands."

[laughing] Oh, damn. That's like a dagger right through me. I hear that. You're right, it seems pathetically feeble what the libertarian response to what we know is a horrible situation has been. And not to mention, yeah, right now, it is a lot of times private institutions that are enforcing this. But for years and years, I've thought, as I've observed the behavior of the left on college campuses, I thought, thank goodness, these people are very, very far from the corridors of power. Well, they're not so far from those corridors anymore, so this could eventually spill much more over into the public sector as well than it has already. But all the same, your point that there's a lot going on in the private sector, about which the libertarian really has not that much to say, is a difficult objection to overcome. I honestly think that.

My main problem here with any non-libertarian solution is largely a strategic and practical one. I feel like any attempt to try to reverse this will just empower an institution that tends

to be dominated by lifelong left-wing civil servants or whatever, who are going to outlast any fly-by-night president and who in the long run are going to make my life miserable, using the very tools I just handed them.

**MCCARTHY:** Yeah, I'm skeptical of kind of well-engineered solutions that are supposedly going to be imposed by government. My view, rather, is that simply having this big sort of mobster, the government, hanging around on the corner of the street there is enough to – you know, you can kind of you can go up to the tech companies. You can say, look, what you guys are doing is wrong, and at some point, maybe this mobster is actually going to come and break your kneecaps.

What you're doing there is not saying that the mobster's a good guy and he's going to take your side in a dispute, because it may turn out the mobster is actually going to break your kneecaps rather than that of the evil tech company executive. But rather, it's simply the idea that there's conflict in our society. This conflict doesn't have to take the very polite form of just boycotts and economic separation, that in fact, there is force involved. And if you don't want force to be involved, which most people really don't, they should behave somewhat better. They should not take the risk of finding out which side the mobster is going to take in a dispute.

Now, the left can call your bluff on this, and you have to be prepared to kind of back yourself up here. But I think this kind of hardball, rough-and-tumble politics is necessary. So while I am skeptical of a lot of the particular policies that my friends who are very anti-tech company are coming up with and would like to see implemented, I nonetheless like the fact that my friends are invested in this, because I think the threat of it makes people like the head of Facebook much more willing to listen to conservatives than they otherwise would be.

**WOODS:** Well, I'll tell you something. I feel like it's a criticism that does land when some conservatives, like the thoughtful conservatives, will say things like, if you're facing people who have a clear agenda against you and your response is, "I have my abstract principles," I can predict how that's going to turn out. Your response is "I have a series of abstract principles," whereas we have a clear-cut agenda to destroy and humiliate you, well, I can sort of see where that's going to go.

Now, let me ask you about, when you talk about anarchism – of course, that's a word that can mean a number of things – but you're talking to conservatives in this article, and you're kind of suggesting that even if conservatives aren't anarchists, there's something they can learn from anarchism. And that's rather a surprising thing for somebody in your shoes to say. What do you mean by it?

**MCCARTHY:** Well, radical anarchist thought is quite critical of conventional liberalism and the ways in which even some left anarchists, not the cartoon caricature people out there with the purple hair who are burning down shops and looting and generally carrying out acts of petty tyranny and violence on the streets right now. But some of your thoughtful anarchists of the 19th century like Alexander Bakunin and others, they had a critique of the way in which state power was being deployed which conservatives can learn from, can actually find quite interesting. Or someone like George Sorel, for example, who was a French more-or-less anarchist theorist. So some of the critique is shared, and the anarchists were willing to follow that critique through in a very complete way.

And a lot of times conservatives are often much more liberal. And I don't mean liberal in necessarily the way that some my libertarians would mean that. I mean a lot of conservatives really are just – they are the liberals or the progressives of 20 or 25 years ago. And so even though they'll stake out some principled claim, in fact, they won't really follow the principle through very deeply. They'll just kind of complacently go along with something that the progressives had set out a few decades ago. And I think the nice thing about a lot of 19th-century anarchist thought is that it's much more radical than that, and it kind of forces you to follow your concepts and your principles through to the very root. And it's not that you necessarily have to be prepared to follow through on those kinds of things in practice every day of the week; it's rather that you at least have to think about do my ideas really go that deep? And if they do, then what are the practical implications, even if sort of recreating the world, having a kind of revolutionary overthrow of the existing economic and social and political order would be completely crazy? So what's the second-best way to implement the radical principles you might have?

**WOODS:** I feel like if I hear an occasional Republican using slogans and talking points from the Reagan years, like government isn't the solution to our problems, government is the problem, and we need less government and a strong defense and traditional values and all that, for some reason that just rings hollow today. And I can't put my finger on why does that ring hollow? What do you think has changed over the course of these years?

**MCCARTHY:** Well, first of all, we've seen that Republican congresses and Republican presidents, it's been over 30 years now since the end of the Reagan years, and it turns out that when Republicans get control of government, you don't actually see any decline in the overall scale of government. And sometimes you might see a slight change in the speed of the growth, but really, the results are so modest, that hearing from Republicans who want to make an antigovernment case is just not very persuasive, first of all because their own party and their own colleagues, even the ones who really are well-meaning, have never really followed through on it in a way that makes any difference.

And beyond that, kind of the more perhaps polarizing or the sharper point today is simply that so many of the new evils we're facing in 2020 are coming from these elements of the private sector or the quasi-private sector perhaps if we're talking about higher education, which are imposing an ideology on people, imposing a worldview, imposing a morality, to use the language of the progressives. It's basically like all of the caricature things that progressives used to say about the power of religion, the power of the Catholic Church or of sort of Puritan America over the individual conscience they claimed to be against in decades past. These are the actual powers that the left is wielding against individual conscience today, especially the religious conscience with the attacks on religious liberty, but really just even on ordinary people.

You're expected now to kind of raise your fist when the BLM protesters come by and start shouting at you and basically getting up to the verge of threatening you. You're expected to participate in their little liturgy of outrage and generally sort of subordinate your conscience and your deepest inner moral core to these sort of lunatic demands that are being made by these people who have no capacity to contribute to society, people who are just pure Jacobins. They're morally the equivalent of the Russian Bolsheviks. And in some ways, they're worse because the Russian Bolsheviks at least had thought about a few serious questions, whereas these punks, they're just sort of pure destruction personified.

**WOODS:** So what we have here is a really difficult — I guess, from a conservative point of view, you would say we have a very difficult balancing act, because — again, I'm not talking about Bob Dole, but I'm talking about a conservative who's really steeped in conservative thought — would say that we have a very difficult balancing act with no simple blueprint, whereby on the one hand, we recognize the potential dangers of the state, the potential revolutionary dangers of the state. The idea of a monopoly on the use of force in the hands of people with revolutionary ambitions can do enormous damage to people and civilization. On the other hand, I think conservatives would say, but on some level, we can't fully live without it. And in terms of politics, you talk about maybe a defensive politics, like maybe I get involved in politics to stop the advance of the juggernaut, but I don't place all my confidence in politics.

Well, this all seems rather complicated. It's much easier to have the kind of progressive view that I should call my congressman, I should march in the streets. It's pretty clear what I should do. I should agitate for this and agitate for that and push through my program. I don't know that conservatives really have a program. So what should they be doing? Practically speaking, what should they do?

**MCCARTHY:** Well, before we get to that, let me sort of take on an issue that is kind of in the background here. I think one area where probably you as well as I would disagree with Murray Rothbard was the way that Rothbard looked at the fall of South Vietnam. So there's this paragraph basically that Murray Rothbard wrote in the 1970s, saying, isn't it wonderful any time a state collapses? And he's looking at the final collapse of South Vietnam as the communist North and the communist insurgents are destroying the South Vietnamese state. And Rothbard is not being a barbarian there. I mean, he knows that the South Vietnamese state, which was propped up by the French imperialists and then by the United States, the South Vietnamese state had committed plenty of its own atrocities. And even by liberal democratic standards, it was not a model of the way that people want things to be.

But so Mr. Rothbard, was saying, look, okay, this thing's coming down. He wasn't saying that what's going to replace it was good, but he was just saying that in the moment, you can enjoy seeing this collapse of a state. And I would disagree with Rothbard there, simply because I don't think you can separate what that collapse is and what's coming after it. And the thing, of course, about left-wing revolutionaries is they really do want to tear down the existing state because they want to create something so much, far worse.

So that's one kind of sort of baseline conservative reason for supporting that old slogan, law and order. It may be that our laws and our order are very imperfect, but we are well aware of the fact that what the left would create in its place would be far worse and that there's a sense in which the apparent anti-statism of the left is actually just a camouflage for getting a much worse kind of statism when they get what they want.

And then related to that, when you look at what's happening right now with what are euphemistically called protests or mostly peaceful protests, I think a lot of libertarians are profoundly confused. So before you had the incident with the shooting and the young kid Kyle and whatnot, I'd actually seen some online videos where there was what looked like an 18-year-old libertarian with an AR-15. He was not the kid who goes out and actually does the shooting. This was some other kid who was defending a gas station against sort of looters and arsonists and whatnot. And he was interviewed by a guy from the *Daily Caller* or from TownHall.com. And this kid was saying, *Hey, I'm just standing up for private property, I'm*

*trying to protect this gas station.* It would obviously be terrible if this gas station were to explode. And this kid, he calls across to these protesters as these protesters are coming towards them. And he basically says, *Hey, don't do anything. I'm on your side. I don't care if you have a problem with the police. I don't care if you have a problem with the government. Just don't damage this private property.*

And I thought to myself, boy, Murray Rothbard, would really have some stern words for this misguided kid. Because you could point out to this kid that these protesters and looters and arsonists, they're not making a distinction between the police and private property. Most of the damage they're doing is being directed towards private property, and that's not an accident. It's not that these protesters are so stupid, they can't tell the difference between a car lot where people are selling cars and a police station. They know damn well exactly what they're doing.

No, what the protests are all about, what the riots and the looting and the arson are all about is not abolishing the police, really. It's certainly not abolishing the course of power of the state. It may be about abolishing police as they exist now. But it's really aimed at sort of recreating the state in their own image. It's about knocking out the parts of the state that defend the private property and that defend law-abiding people, and it's about creating a state that is more protective of the criminal class and that is more persecuting towards sort of nonviolent gun owners, for example, towards business people, towards people who use their free speech rights in ways that the left doesn't like. The issue here, the issue that's actually on the streets is not liberty versus police abuse. It's rather a left that wants to use as an excuse police shootings to tear down the old sort of police-protect-the-businesses model and put in a new police or some sort of new institution of armed social workers and force the left moral dictates upon everyone.

And if an 18-year-old kid with his AR-15 standing there guarding the gas station isn't clear on that, he is wasting his time. And he's, in fact, probably putting himself in a situation where he may have to use that AR-15, and then he's going to find out, just as this kid who did use his AR-15 is finding out, that in fact the left is perfectly happy to see people prosecuted when they use their firearms, perfectly happy to see people have the full weight of the law and law enforcement thrown upon them if they are defending private property, if they're defending the rule of law.

What the left is angry about is anytime people who want to defy the rule of law and want to smash windows and shoplift and do other kind of stupid, petty acts of violence and vandalism, the left really doesn't want to see those people go to jail. It really doesn't want to see them put in any kind of disadvantage. So this is a fight for civilization, and these kind of naive views about making a difference between the police and the gas stations and the car lots and so forth is really very misguided. I think Murray Rothbard himself would be extremely clear about this, just as Rothbard was quite clear about what was going on in the 1992 riots.

**WOODS:** Well, there's definitely a naivete that comes in part from a truth, which is that there are a lot of people who never heard of libertarian ideas. And when they actually have them explained to them say, "I never thought of that," and then they change their minds. But what some libertarians aren't getting is that these aren't those people [laughing]. This is not what we're dealing with. This is not a matter of they never came across Hayek in their education. That's not what —

**MCCARTHY:** Well, and here's kind of a I think historical example, which is not a parallel for what's going on in the US right now. And I want to be very clear about that, because as stupid and awful as what's happening in the US right now is, we are not in the situation of Russia at the time of World War I and shortly thereafter. However, you have sort of the tsarist government and then you have Kerensky's republic in Russia. And you have first of all these violent anarchists; you also have of course these different varieties of communists who are engaged in violence, but they're also engaged in Parliament. And you have someone like Lenin, who you can identify as being a leader of these communists.

And if you are a libertarian, if, say, you're a 2020, sort of Jo-Jorgensen-voting libertarian type here in America, and you get in a time machine and you go back a little more than 100 years, you find yourself in Russia a couple of years before the Russian Revolution. And for some reason, the Tsar is going to listen to you or Kerensky is going to listen to you and do what you tell him to do about Lenin.

The question is: do you shoot Lenin, or do you say, *Hey, let's have a discussion with Lenin. Let's have Lenin win elections and go to Parliament. It's perfectly fine to have these communists using the rule of law to their own advantage?* Or do you actually say, *You know what? Obviously, we have to protect people's rights of dissent; obviously, we have to protect people's rights to participate in government. We as libertarians or we as just good people in the year 2020 recognize this. However, there comes a point where the revolutionary left really is looking to take power, and you need to go beyond the ordinary rules of nice rights discourse, and you actually need to take out this cancerous element which is going to destroy your civilization?*

And again, I want to be very clear. This is not what's happening in the United States right now, and I'm not being kind of sly or anything here. I really do think the United States, while it has a lot of idiots and a lot of vandals and a left-wing ideological force which is not quite a kind of revolutionary Bolshevik force — it's a morally Jacobin force, yes. It's morally as bad and in some ways worse than the Bolsheviks. But it isn't actually the kind of organized violent force that either the Jacobins or the Bolsheviks were. So I'm not saying that there is a Lenin out there who needs to be sort of treated the way that Abraham Lincoln treated the Confederates during the Civil War.

But I am saying that, in principle, what does a libertarian do when you're confronted with that situation? When you are confronted with a person like Lenin and a movement like the Bolsheviks, are you willing to use the force necessary to stop them? Or are you going to say my rules don't permit me to do this; therefore if it winds up and I wind up and my family winds up going the way of the Romanovs, well, that's acceptable, because I'm upholding this sort of what Gandhi-like position or something? I mean, even Gandhi wasn't quite totally naive about this.

**WOODS:** Right. Right, right. Well, I couldn't agree more. I could not agree more. There are some situations in which my primary goal is not to be the world's greatest libertarian. And by the way, libertarianism, properly understood, probably does allow for the Lenin solution that you're proposing.

**MCCARTHY:** Well, because I think a worldly and effective but also I think a morally principled libertarianism would recognize that there are certain kinds of force and certain kinds of threats, which they may not be that Lenin is pointing a gun at you right now, but in principle,

Lenin is in fact pointing a gun at you and at the entire system of order and law and just normal ordinary human life. And that has to be recognized and acted upon even more firmly than if Lenin were pointing a gun at you. Because if someone points a gun at you, yeah, you have a right to defend yourself, you have a right to shoot back. But sometimes someone will point a gun and it really is not quite as severe a danger is when you have an armed, militant, and organized revolutionary force, which is clearly not just going to point its guns; it's actually going to pull those triggers, and you know they're going to pull those triggers.

**WOODS:** Well, I'm going to recommend, of course, people read your article. I'll link to it on the show notes page, [TomWoods.com/1746](http://TomWoods.com/1746). They'll get a taste of *Modern Age*, the eminent and the venerable – that's the word I'm looking for – the venerable journal from the 1950s, of which Dan is now the distinguished editor. So [TomWoods.com/1746](http://TomWoods.com/1746) is the place to go. A lot of excellent food for thought. We could continue this conversation for quite a long time. But thank you very much for your time today.

**MCCARTHY:** Well, Tom, thank you, and if I might very quickly address this question you asked about kind of what the conservative programs –

**WOODS:** Oh, shoot, I forgot my own question. Yes.

**MCCARTHY:** Yeah, I think what you see Donald Trump doing reflects a lot of the old Pat Buchanan program. And here, too, you see a number of issues where there's a certain kind of extremely formalistic view of libertarianism that would be incompatible with what might be called a kind of nationalist platform that Buchanan or Donald Trump is representing. But then, in fact, I think if libertarians thought about it carefully, they would find it's quite something they should support compared to what the left is trying to do.

So for example, on immigration conservatives believe and sort of national conservatives certainly believe in limiting immigration. They believe in enforcing an orderly process for having people come in. They don't believe in tolerating illegal immigration. And they want to limit the amount of legal immigration that we do have. But this is simply saying that there should be an orderly legal process that everyone sort of agrees upon as a set of rules. It doesn't say that we hate immigrants or anything like that, certainly not. On the contrary, we want the best people to come in. But in order to guarantee that, we have to have an orderly system. And also, we want people to come in in a way that isn't putting American citizens at a disadvantage. We also want immigration to work in a way that is not simply being used by the Democratic Party to pad out its voting rolls and to perpetuate itself in power.

So corporate America, which really does want cheaper labor – and in some ways libertarians might agree with that. But corporate America is in an alliance with the ideological left of the Democratic Party, which wants immigration not just for reasons of less expensive labor, but because they really do think, because they control the education apparatus, they'll be able to turn new immigrants and their offspring into Democratic Party voters. And unfortunately, there's a long precedent for that. So on immigration I think the conservative view is clear. You have to limit it. And I think libertarians, if they were thinking in the long run, they would agree with us there.

Similarly, when it comes to trade, I mean, my views are not that the kind of industrial policy or protection you need is something that's going to be very sort of micromanaged. Rather, I just want to look at the steps that are taken not just by Communist China, but by our own

financial sector and our own banking sector, which is obviously created by the Federal Reserve in so many ways, and saying this is distorting our economy. This is actually putting a lot of American workers at a disadvantage in places like Pennsylvania and Ohio and Michigan. And the idea that you may need some government policies that are going to counterbalance the government policies that are being made both in Washington and in Beijing that are against our workers is just a reality that has to be sort of taken into account. And it may not be the perfect world that libertarians want, but here too, it is actually a way of trying to address an imbalance that's been created by statism on the part of Beijing and on the part of our finance sector.

And then on a number of other issues, I can make a quite similar cases. In foreign policy, I think the real libertarians and the Trump national conservatives are very much on the same page. We want to keep out of these regime-change wars; we want to keep out of the business of trying to democratize the planet by arms. Instead, we want to deal with other powers as they actually are. And some of those powers are going to be quite sort of nasty. Vladimir Putin, he's a gangster-like character. He uses violence to perpetuate his power. However, that does not mean that America is in a position to instigate or stoke some sort of great change in Russia that would be a vast improvement. Because remember, Russia has had many kinds of governments, and a lot of them have been a lot worse, actually, than the Vladimir Putin. So it's not the case that simply by getting rid of one guy, you have a natural improvement.

And that's, again, a kind of realist approach to foreign policy, which I think libertarians would agree with as well. But libertarians sometimes I think go a little too far in saying that the United States is the kind of prime instigator of conflict around the world. That's not the case. But it is the case that the US, in trying to do what can't be done, in trying to kind of use force for these sort of noble purposes of changing other countries, in fact, creates a lot more harm than good. And we need to stop that. And libertarians and national conservatives agree.

**WOODS:** Well, I wanted people to have a chance to hear your views, because you're one of the intelligent ones. So thank you for that. Thanks also for that last bit, because it somehow completely escaped my mind. I can't do these this early in the morning. I'm not suited to it. But anyway, thanks again, Dan. I appreciate it.

**MCCARTHY:** Thanks, Tom.