



## Episode 947: Divided Republicans, Unified Democrats, and Our Future

Guest: Paul Gottfried

**WOODS:** All right, this is a fun one. I'm linking to your column on the show notes page, [TomWoods.com/947](http://TomWoods.com/947), "Why Democrats Are More Unified Than the GOP." What I liked about this column is that it, implicitly at least, takes aim at the self-congratulatory Republicans, who honestly think they are in the ascendency and that the Democrats are really divided among themselves, when the reality is precisely the opposite. The Republicans are divided among themselves, and even though the Democrats may consist of a bunch of squabbling tribes, they don't squabble about wanting to extend the power of the state, so they're not really divided and their future is still – they still control education, they control opinion molding. I would say their future is still pretty bright.

**GOTTFRIED:** I would say their future is extremely bright. And I mentioned to you before an article by Robert Merry that appeared in the same publication a day before mine came out, and you know, I agree with his gloomy prediction that if Trump were to fall, the Democrats would be in an extremely strong position. And I'm particularly impressed by the way they're helping to bring down the government. They remind me of the Nazis and Communists in Germany between 1931 and 1933 when they created a *Schwermehrheit*, an obstructionist majority. The Democrats are extremely good. They coordinate their activities with mobs on the street that are vandalizing property and so forth. They don't condemn this, of course. And then of course the media joins in the fray. I would think they would have something like close to a majority of votes in an election. I think their position may soon become unassailable.

**WOODS:** Now, how can that be when, on the other hand – I think this is what somebody would say – you had this very, very unlikely Donald Trump victory in the face of overwhelming odds? Would it be that, because the odds are so overwhelming and because the attacks are so relentless, that his razor-thin – I mean, it wasn't a razor-thin Electoral College victory, but still, it's not like an overwhelming majority of the country supports him. If he loses a tiny bit, they're back.

**GOTTFRIED:** They're back. And I'm also looking at these congressional races in which the Republicans are actually congratulating themselves. Their margin of victory against some leftist, yuppie unknown in Georgia was extremely thin in what was a heavily Republican district. They didn't do all that well in Montana. They didn't do all that well in some of these other races. They won by a few percentage points. No, I think their position is far more precarious than they're willing to recognize. And also, one has to remember that Trump was running against one of the weakest presidential

candidates that the Democrats have put up in many, many years. I mean, it would be harder to find a more inept, more obnoxious opponent for the Republicans in a presidential race than Hillary Clinton.

**WOODS:** Okay, so give me a little bit more detail about the ideological basis of the unity of the Democrats, and then I want to talk about why the Republicans can't do the same thing.

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, well, I think the American Democrats are the quintessential cultural Marxist type of party that we now see taking power throughout Western Europe. They are committed to LGBT. They are committed to something approximating an open borders position on immigration. They basically are able to appeal to all groups that see the white Christian majority in the United States as threatening or as prejudiced or oppressive. And they also have a lock-hold on young people who are coming through our educational institutions, in which students are being saturated with a cultural Marxist perspective. This is not traditional Marxist. They are not opposed to socialism because they want to give the state as much power as they can in order to accommodate these grievance-ridden constituencies.

But I also think that there is a kind of unifying ideology. It's a post-Christian replacement religion for Christianity that is based on the state, giving power to the state to carry out social engineering ad infinitum for the purpose of destroying all oppressive qualities, not so much between social classes, but between men and women, between heterosexuals and homosexuals, transgendered and whatever the opposite of that is. And there is unfortunately an enormous constituency for that.

Also, the Democrats I think in the Congress and in other positions are united by a view of the opposition as being made up of oppressive, white, Christian males who are oppressing minorities. And these are the minorities to whom the Democrats appeal.

The Republicans, on the other hand, as I indicate in my article, are not held together by very much other than the fact that most of them are white Protestants living in certain areas of the country. I think the ideological glue that held them together is sort of coming apart. And as I look at the Republicans in Congress, I'm not sure that I see very much doctrinal unity or doctrinal cohesion among them.

**WOODS:** And that raises a question. The Democrats, they vote pretty monolithically. The Republicans have, whether they're express or otherwise, different caucuses, different ideological groups, interest groups.

**GOTTFRIED:** Right.

**WOODS:** What's different about them that makes it impossible for them to be as unified as the Democrats are?

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, I think you've mentioned this. Aside from a certain sociological profile or at least electoral profile that most of their voters are drawn from white Protestant or white Christian – mostly white Protestant areas of the country – for instance the one that I live in – and are generally committed to some form of

patriotism and what they call free enterprise but is usually a kind of mixed economy, there's very little that I see holding the Republican Party together.

Much more holding the Democrats together, because they have an enemy, and as an author of a controversial work on the German political theorist Carl Schmidt, I would say that the enemy very often is what unifies a group. It creates a community, or a political community. And the hatred for white Christian bigots, heterosexuals, whatever enemy the Democrats are focusing on, provides a great deal of unity. And the identification of Republicans, however innocuous and ineffective they are with the enemy, I think hold the Democratic Party ideologically together. It provides internal cohesion that the Republicans simply don't have.

**WOODS:** All right, let me read a sentence from here and let's elaborate on it. "The Republican Party by contrast stands for nothing in particular, except for a more slowly growing federal welfare state, a neoconservative foreign policy except at its libertarian margins, and government incentives for business." And I'll read one more sentence. "Republicans in Congress have a sprinkling of libertarians, mostly on its right, but otherwise it's an organization that wants to manage public administration, keep down the minimum wage, and get its candidates elected."

Now, I don't disagree with any of that, but on the other hand, if the country is leftish enough that a group of people as horrible as the Democrats could be constantly on the verge of winning, then what could the Republican Party do to get any better that wouldn't just be even worse suicide than what they're doing now?

**GOTTFRIED:** Well, I don't know if it's worse suicide, but there has to be some kind of countermovement. There has to be some kind of right in order to control this left, because otherwise everything is lost. And what the Republican Party has tried to do is to focus on a few sort of bread-and-butter issues in which it tries to differentiate themselves from the other side and make piecemeal concessions on every social issue of the left, and I think most disastrously on immigration. And I think unless they can mount a resistance – and I don't know whether it's possible. But unless they can mount a resistance, the left wins, even if the Republicans hang on as the second party.

And I think this is also something that aids the left, that you have what the French call [inaudible] and you have the alternative party system. So even if the other party stands for very little, you can say that this is democracy or parliamentary democracy because you can vote for A or B. And this is I think exactly the position into which the Republicans have put themselves. I think Trump is sort of the bull in the china shop who won't play by these rules, but there's a good chance he'll just be destroyed and that the party with which he is now linked will repudiate him.

The most disastrous thing the Republican Party has done – and here I'm not revealing things that people don't know about me. I think the most disastrous thing is allowing the neoconservatives to take over the conservative movement, to define Republican positions, because these people are not only part of the left, they also have a disastrous foreign policy, which will push us into more and more wars, which is not going to aid the right in the end and it could result in a disastrous international situation. So I think with the Republicans, you not only have a party that is utterly gutless in what it is doing at home, but is also linked to a kind of international

brinksmanship because of the neoconservatives, which could land us in some kind of war.

**WOODS:** I had David Stockman on some time ago, and he's absolutely convinced that by the end of 2018, Trump is not going to be in office anymore. He says, I don't see how he hangs on, given the ferocity of the opposition and given that, unlike Nixon who could count on the infrastructure of the Republican Party backing him for at least a while, he doesn't even have that. Now, I pushed back and said that I didn't think that would happen, but I saw the plausibility of his case. The key reason that I didn't state at the time is that Trump is such a boon for the Democrats. He rallies their base unlike anyone in history. Why would they want to replace him with Pence, who's going to put everybody back to sleep?

**GOTTFRIED:** That is a very good question, but I think bringing down Trump would be a kind of victorious moment for the Democrats. It would be a sort of vindication of everything they've been working on. I do agree with you that the long-range consequences may not be as beneficial as keeping Trump where he is, but that seems to be the goal towards which they're working in unity, and I think the defeat of Trump would certainly be looked upon as a victory by the left – and by the Republican establishment, which I think would be very happy to be rid of him.

**WOODS:** Tell me your opinion about health care and Trump's emphasis on health care, just from a – forget about the policy angle of it, but from a strategic point of view, has that been a mistake or not?

**GOTTFRIED:** I think it's been a big mistake. For one of the few times in my life, I find myself in agreement with Charles Krauthammer. The smartest thing he could do is just let Obamacare implode because it is the mess that the Democrats created, and obviously any attempt he has made to fix it has made him more unpopular and has also caused the populous to rally to a failing Obamacare. So there's no advantage I can see to Trump trying to replace Obamacare, certainly not at this point.

**WOODS:** So if you were advising him and you really wanted to keep him focused on three things, other than immigration, what would they be?

**GOTTFRIED:** Tax policy, number one. I think immigration is very important. I think he's doing something with immigration, but he's not getting any credit for this. Something else that I would tell him, not about policy, but I think it's something that he should do: he really has to change his image. The tweeting might be amusing and he's obviously getting CNN quite angry at him. They're behaving irrationally and so forth, but it is not increasing his support among the people, and I think he has to stop that. And internationally, I think he should work for more cooperation with Russia, rather than accept the neoconservative position of escalating confrontation with Putin.

**WOODS:** I had Lew Rockwell on yesterday, and what I said was if – I don't expect very much from politics these days for reasons that you would not have any disagreement with. I don't expect much. But I thought, given that he was independent, relatively headstrong, there was a remote chance that the foreign policy might change. So to me, I wanted to see at least that. And so for that reason, I want him to succeed, because that's a morally good thing for him to succeed at. And I said to Lew what he

needs right beside him, literally, is Pat Buchanan. He needs Pat's strategic sense, his sense of when the president should speak and when he should shut up, and he also needs a couple of well crafted Pat Buchanan speeches of the sort he used to write for Spiro Agnew. That's what Trump could use.

**GOTTFRIED:** I agree. I agree. No, no, people will say, Why do you prefer somebody like Buchanan to somebody like Trump? And the answer is that Buchanan is reflective, articulate –

**WOODS:** Knowledgeable.

**GOTTFRIED:** – knowledgeable, none of which Trump seems to be. I mean, I think what we've ended up with is an inferior version, a vastly inferior version of Pat Buchanan in the White House.

**WOODS:** And when you say Pat's articulate, I mean, he can slice and dice you with one of his columns or one of his speeches. They really are great oratory, and the speeches that he wrote for other people are really beautifully done. And even his enemies admit that, that he's darn good at this.

**GOTTFRIED:** Mm hmm.

**WOODS:** And instead, we're getting – I'm not interested in – I mean, I get that to some degree there's a part of the paleo wing that is okay with saying, Let's have another tax bracket for millionaires because we hate those people and most of them screw us anyway. But you know, I'm just not interested in that. Like, that's just bad – Yeah, I can think of all kinds of people in America I don't like, but how childish to take that out on them via tax policy. So to hear that Bannon is floating the idea of a millionaire's tax or something – So in other words, we went to all this trouble, I would be saying if I were part of the base, to get these people elected and they're wasting their time with this? When was the last time the Democrats got in and seriously were sitting there talking about some major initiative long associated with the Republicans that they wanted to do? They know what they want and they go in there and get it. What a waste of time. It's totally stupid. It's probably not going to have any real revenue effect anyway. It's stupid.

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, the worst waste of time, and this is one of my traditional grievances against the Republicans, is believing that you can gain black votes by beating up on the Democrats as a racist party.

**WOODS:** Yeah, that does not work. How many times –

**GOTTFRIED:** It's insanity [laughing].

**WOODS:** That does not work. How many times do you have to do it before you say, This isn't working? It only alienates everybody else and it makes us look like we have an IQ of 65 – which they do, but don't make it obvious.

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, but they're also driven by WASP guilt. I'm convinced of that.

**WOODS:** Yeah. It must be.

**GOTTFRIED:** They want to be liked. The Bush family are like that. But I mean, I wish they would stop making fools of themselves by saying those things. Or if we support more settlements on the West Bank, more Jews will vote for the Republicans or something. I mean, some of these schemes to win support from groups that you're not going to budge is ridiculous. Or if we let everybody come in – legalize all the illegals or put them on a path to citizenship and open the borders, more Hispanics will vote for the Republicans. I mean, this is such nonsense. But I think a lot of it is driven by guilt or uneasiness that certain minorities don't like white Protestants or something like that, because there's no way of explaining these positions as clever strategy, in my opinion.

**WOODS:** So when I think back to when I was in college, I was a bit of a Republican policy wonk type. I was a Jack Kemp type. In fact, I even wore a Jack Kemp pin on my jacket when I was college.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] Oh.

**WOODS:** I know. Look, my listeners already know the incriminating stuff about me. You may not –

**GOTTFRIED:** I used to be a Rockefeller Republican, which was probably even worse [laughing].

**WOODS:** Okay, so you're laughing – all right, so forget it. Anyway – and by the way, a Rockefeller Republican in the days of Rockefeller was probably substantially to the right of where the party is now [laughing].

**GOTTFRIED:** I agree [laughing].

**WOODS:** Well, anyway, so that's who I was. And I really thought that the Democrats have caused a lot of problems and we have a lot of policies that might make a lot of people's lives better.

**GOTTFRIED:** Right, right.

**WOODS:** And by the way, in the grand scheme of things, that probably is roughly correct, but the point is I had this naive confidence, which is a totally leftist confidence, that there were political solutions to all problems that beset us. And that's not so. And in general, the idea that there is a human solution to a lot of intractable problems is not true either, and a real conservative comes to the conclusion: there are some things that human effort just can't fix that maybe time has to fix, or some other circumstances have to arise before it can be fixed.

And maybe the situation that we see in the Republican Party where – I mean, I still think of them – I went through a phase where I said that the parties are the same. And clearly that's – obviously, that's not quite true. But I still feel like at least I can talk to some Republicans. I mean, they're terrible on war, but I can convert some of

them. I've converted some of them on that. I've converted very few Democrats. So I still have an interest in what's going on in the Republican Party, and yet I feel like at this point there's probably nothing that can be done.

But meanwhile, Paul, there are people like – not many, but there's Rand Paul. The two people I like the most – I'm not saying they're my big heroes in the history of the world, but you know, relatively speaking, Rand Paul, especially under Trump, I think has actually been pretty good. And I actually much prefer Thomas Massie to any other member of the House of Representatives. We have those people. Isn't that a start? Or is that a fizzle that doesn't matter?

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, no, I agree with you. I think there are people, if I can use that horrible cliché, who speak truth to power. And you know, I would agree with you about those politicians who are not as bad as the others. But I think one area in which we have lost disastrously is holding onto the right. And we can do very little about this because the establishment Republicans, the neoconservatives – what I call Conservatism, Incorporated – has sort of taken over the right and excluded the dissenting voices, excluding the unauthorized right, excluding paleoconservatives, paleolibertarians – not just the alt right. And what this has done of course is to restrict the political conversation on the right to people who are mostly not on the right.

And I'd be very happy if we could open it up. I'd be very happy if we could have political conversations that would receive media attention between paleoconservatives and paleolibertarians. But that's not likely to happen. But I think without a strong, serious right or conservative movement, the Republican Party is going to stumble around, and when it sort of looks for foreign policy solutions and even rhetoric, it will unfortunately accept the neoconservative nostrums.

**WOODS:** I think back to my days as a CR, a College Republican, and now when I hear that so-and-so is a young College Republican, I just think, Oh, been there, done that. I know exactly the whole – I know the script; I know the hymnbook; I know everything they think and say.

**GOTTFRIED:** Right.

**WOODS:** And what gets me is they all think they're incredibly cheeky for being College Republicans. And of course, on modern college campuses, that is somewhat cheeky. But they're not doing nearly enough. They're way, way just too – I mean, to think at this point, after we've observed the horrors of the managerial state that what we're really facing is, well, we just need to get rid of the Democrats – that's step one.

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** But the Republicans have sat back and let craziness go on for years and years and have demonized and condemned people who speak out. It ain't enough to be a College Republican no more. That is not it. Be a libertarian. Be a paleo-whatever. But

the last thing in the world you want to be is a guy who says, I can't believe we get to invite Fred Barnes to come speak on our campus.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] Yes, yes.

**WOODS:** You have to be kidding.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] Excitement of the year.

**WOODS:** [laughing] Exactly.

**GOTTFRIED:** Inviting Fred Barnes to the campus where I work would have been considered quite a coup.

**WOODS:** Oh, no doubt, no doubt. And he would have been condemned as a Nazi —

**GOTTFRIED:** He would have followed Angela Davis —

**WOODS:** [laughing] Yeah, he would have followed Angela Davis. That's right.

**GOTTFRIED:** He would. He had Angela Davis as a —

**WOODS:** Yeah, I ran into Angela Davis at — I went to the commencement ceremony the year after I graduated as an undergrad because I had some friends graduating, and there was Angela Davis. I knew for a fact it was her and people confirmed it was her. She was just wandering around part of the crowd. And I thought, Isn't that funny, because if certain notorious other figures on the right had been wandering around, they would have been, you know, killed or something [laughing]. They would have never been heard from again.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] Right, right.

**WOODS:** But by the way, that actually raises an interesting question. If you were in charge of — let's say you had been given a lot of grant money and the only string was you had to spend the money bringing speakers to college campuses. Who would be the speakers, other than yourself, Paul Gottfried would send out onto the campuses?

**GOTTFRIED:** Well, if I were looking for somebody on the right that I could invite, it would be people who would not be a part of the authorized right. For example, I would invite someone like John Derbyshire, Peter Brimelow. I'd invite yourself. I'd invite the people I have speaking at the Mencken Club to come and speak. I think someone like Ann Coulter, although she's shallow, does provide shock value for the left. I might invite Ann Coulter. Certainly Pat Buchanan if he'd be willing to come. And there are some sort of decent people that I occasionally find writing for *Townhall*. Some of them are younger people, but you know, I would invite them as well.

I certainly would not invite Fred Barnes. I would not invite Ben Shapiro. I would keep neocons as far away — what is — it's where Trump wants to keep ISIS. He wants to get them the hell out of there or something. That's what I would do with neocons. And

most of the people that I see on Fox News are utterly soporific, just repeating Republican talking points, so I wouldn't invite them.

By the way, somebody I might invite to speak, because I occasionally think he has interesting ideas about the welfare-warfare state is Noam Chomsky. The more I read Chomsky, the more impressed I am by him. Despite the fact that he is a Marxist reductionist, he has some interesting ideas on why the United States is always belligerent and what are the interests that are being served. So I might invite a leftist like Noam Chomsky. I certainly wouldn't invite Alan Dershowitz, but I might invite Chomsky.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I'm thinking about this. I mean, these are interesting suggestions. And when you mentioned the Mencken Club, that reminded me to tell you I went to the Mencken Club website. It has no mention of the 2017 event.

**GOTTFRIED:** Oh, but we haven't put it on yet. It'll be put on next week.

**WOODS:** Okay, next week, because I want to try to do what I can to promote that because I'll be speaking at that.

**GOTTFRIED:** That is very good.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**GOTTFRIED:** Yeah, we usually put it on around the middle of July.

**WOODS:** Okay, so tell me exactly, by the way, where that will be so that anybody listening who might have an interest in hanging around with unapproved people would be able to do so.

**GOTTFRIED:** Okay. Well, we meet near the Baltimore-Washington Airport at the Sheraton hotel, but information will be sent out, as I said, in about the next week and a half for those who would like to register. And this is our tenth anniversary gathering and we're expecting a very large crowd this time.

**WOODS:** All right, so it's going to be fun, and I'm speaking there. And I don't do that much speaking anymore. I speak for the Mises Institute, but with speaking, I kind of feel like been there, done that. I'd rather give one talk and then have it viewed by 50,000 people on YouTube than give a hundred talks viewed by 500 people. I just, I'd rather stay home with my family, really.

**GOTTFRIED:** I understand that.

**WOODS:** But then when you raised this, and I just thought about it, and I thought, You know? Well, heck, I would enjoy doing this. It wouldn't be a chore in any way, as some speaking engagements are, frankly. This would not in any way be a chore. It would be pure delight, and the only reason I would be attacked at this event would be for not being right-wing enough.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] That's probably true.

**WOODS:** And that is at least exciting to me. That I would enjoy because that would be an interesting change for me to be in that situation. So when that goes up, I'll tell people and link to it, especially –

**GOTTFRIED:** You'll be the first one who receives the information once we post it. It'll be sent to you at once.

**WOODS:** Okay, good, good. Because if there's anybody who lives near Baltimore, these people are desperate to hear some normal person come through.

**GOTTFRIED:** Right.

**WOODS:** So we are just what the doctor ordered. Well, anyway, thank you, Paul, for the conversation today. Again, the original article that made me decide we've got to talk about this will be linked at [TomWoods.com/947](http://TomWoods.com/947), which you should read. You should read everything that Paul writes because it's always interesting and provocative. So anyway, looking forward to seeing you both in New York for the Mises event in October and then near Baltimore in November for the Mencken Club. It's going to be – it's the year of Gottfried this year.

**GOTTFRIED:** [laughing] Yes. We'll all go out in a blaze of glory this year.

**WOODS:** [laughing] That's right. Thanks a lot, Paul.

**GOTTFRIED:** Thank you for having me again.