

#1550 Red States, Where Democracy Goes to Die and Terrible Legislation is Born

[00:00:00]

Intro 3-21-23

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast; in which we shall take a look at how G O P controlled states are subverting democracy with a form of competitive autocracy, and some of the horrifying legislation these states then pass after they're no longer subject to the opinions of the general public.

Clips today are from the David Pakman Show, More Perfect Union, The AI Franken Podcast, The Takeaway, The Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Prince William H. Texas, and Isaiah R. Martin, both from TikTok, Democracy Now, and The Young Turks. With additional members only clips from The Young Turks, The PBS NewsHour, and Alex Wagner Tonight. Stay tuned to the end where I will connect a few dots that point directly to how to fix the problem in the States.

The Autocratic Nightmare of State Republicans (David Pepper Interview) - The David Pakman Show - Air Date 2-5-22

DAVID PEPPER: I'd say my biggest concern is that we focus on some of the most prominent people like Trump, and we should, but my biggest worry is the other [00:01:00] side that has... some of the players have been at this for a long time. And while we focus on the high profile people and the things that make a lot of noise and the bright shiny objects like a Marjorie Taylor Greene, they're focused on the institutions that either support democracy or, if weakened, could usher in the lack of democracy or ultimately something that I think is referred to often as competitive autocracy.

And the reason I wrote the book is to say, it reminds me of the movie Don't Look Up, which I was at first afraid to watch, but then glad I did. It's saying, don't only look at Washington, the institutions that shape our democracy in so

many ways are states. One side figured that out a long time ago. They have a minority view that can only survive in a world without robust democracy. So they've had their eye and tentacles on the states for a long time, and they're converting them into, as I described, laboratories of autocracy that are nonstop undermining [00:02:00] key, principles and tenants and protections for democracy, and it's accelerating.

Look at the institutions, don't just look at our usual politics, which is, federal majorities, one through swing districts and swing states, look at the institutions that shape democracy. Those are largely state houses. Yes, the federal government can do important things to protect against those, they must, but the heart of it is at the state level. I just think one side has been blind to that for a generation. The other side has been focused on it like a laser and are scoring victory after victory because of that.

DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW: Competitive authoritarianism, that's a term I've used with my audience before this. This is important to understand. This, is that you have, at least I say in theory, but maybe some people would say in principle, democratic institutions and electoral competition, but it's not really fair competition. Is that generally the gist of it?

DAVID PEPPER: Yeah, it's rigging things in advance. It's minority rule locked in with the [00:03:00] veneer of legitimacy, with the illusion that everything was fair and up for grabs. That's quite an accusation, but we know what it looks like, it looks like Hungary, and so we make this accusation it's not really rebuttable anymore because they're all going to Hungary celebrating it in the wide open, tucker Carlson, CPAC, Trump, endorsing Orban. They're not hiding that the competitive autocracy system that, we see in other countries is that what they want when they embrace Hungary.

As I go through the book, almost every element that Hungary is going through, rigging legislative elections, suppressing votes in the opposition party, attacking courts, almost every element that Hungary, go through the checklist is going through, you could overlay into State House after State House in our country, it's the same pattern. So it's not like they're only celebrating it in 2022, either they've been modeling off of it or just doing the same thing on their own for years. [00:04:00]

And so yeah, it is the model. And that's why I think one of the reasons I wrote the book is not simply to say, here are the elements of it, which we're concerned about, but we have to move away from doing things that unintentionally legitimize it all. And when we are too silent, when we treat it as politics, as

normal by allowing the filibuster to stop us from stopping it, by treating it like any other issue, we play into the competitive autocracy end goal, which is not only to suppress democracy, but to make everyone think that it's actually still is there in a viable way. They need to seem legitimate.

DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW: That's the key point, right? If people believe it's legitimate, they are less likely to rise up against it.

DAVID PEPPER: Correct, and it sustains for much longer. Again, what is not an effective competitive autocracy—storming a building. That was not what you do. I'm sure Orban was like, no, that, that does not look legitimate. The key to my success is [00:05:00] not openly, trying to overturn an election, it's actually to subtly predetermine outcomes, everyone votes, and you wipe your hand and say, "Hey, look, election happened. I won again for the 10th time, even though I'm in the minority."

So that's why I think we, and some may not like this, but that's why I thought it was good when those Texas legislators left Texas. They were declaring this illegitimate. You don't normally leave your state. I wouldn't recommend that, but if something is so illegitimate that if you just sit there and vote no and it passes, the voters may think, well that's just politics as normal.

It's reaching a point where I think people who are fighting for democracy have to call this out. And that's why, to me the Senate needs to keep amping it up. Joe Biden can't go silent again. If we have to force Chuck Grassley and Josh Hawley and Cruz to debate for two weeks on end to stop our votes to protect democracy, great, make them do it. Because competitive autocracy [00:06:00] relies on a sense that it's legitimate and normal. We know it's not, but I think too rarely do we actually act in that way, which is allowing it to continue.

Republicans Are Staging A Legislative Coup - More Perfect Union - Air Date 1-5- 22

MIGUEL RIVERA: Over the past 10 years, Texas gained about 4 million people in total population. 95% of that population was people of color. Despite people of color fueling the growth over the past decade, there were no new majority/minority districts drawn in either the state senate, the State House, or

the Congressional map. In fact both committees made an effort to reduce the number of majority/minority districts on all three levels.

There was a particular attention to a district just north of Austin, in a county called Bell County, that is home to a sizeable black population. In this county we had two districts placed within its boundaries that looked like a donut.

There was the outer ring district, and then there was the inner district, that basically worked to cut up the population of the two biggest cities within that county. Basically ensuring that people of color in that county could not elect candidates of their choice. Some of the worst districts were in the [00:07:00] greater Houston area, and into the Houston suburbs in Fort Bend County.

In particular, congressional District Seven take parts of populations in Harris County, and then also cut up the AAPI communities that have grown tremendously there over the past 10 years. Because of these maps that don't accurately reflect Texans and their values, we get a legislature that is passing laws that are not favorable with the people of Texas. This includes;

ARCHIVE NEWS CLIP: Senate Bill Eight, known as the Texas Heartbeat Law, bans almost all abortions in the state.

The Texas bill is unique, permitting almost anyone to sue any person or provider who may have helped someone get an abortion after the limit.

LEKHA SHUPECK: North Carolina is really a true 50/50 State. Roy Cooper, who is our Democratic governor, won reelection by 51%. The same election where Trump won the state, all the statewide elections you see are right down the line.

We would hopefully expect that our state politics, that our congressional members would reflect that but they don't because of gerrymandering. In [00:08:00] the maps that just got passed, the communities that are being targeted to dilute their representation are all urban communities. They're all the places where communities of color are.

They're taking places like Greensboro, it's a growing town, it's our third largest city, has a very large historical Black population. That city is basically being scooped out of its county, and paired with really rural mountain counties that are very far away, have very different interests, and are demographically very different.

Even if Democrats are winning more than 50% of the votes, they're still ending up in the minority in our state legislature. Our state legislature is deciding all these really impactful things. We are still one of the few states that hasn't expanded Medicaid. It's something that the vast majority of North Carolinians want.

It would give health coverage to 500, 600,000 people in our state who really need it. There's this just huge mismatch between what people of the state actually want, what they've actually voted for, and what they get

MICHAEL LI: [00:09:00] Georgia has 14 congressional districts and under the map that was passed, Republicans have between nine and 10 of those seats. Which is really remarkable in a state that is one of the quintessential battlegrounds.

Right now, Georgia is very much a 50/50 state almost evenly down the line. What we saw last decade is the emergence of an increasingly diverse, multiracial Georgia. Take Gwinnett County for example, which is in the suburbs of Atlanta. In 1990, Gwinnett County was 90% white. It's only 30% white to date, and yet that is not at all being recognized in the maps that the Georgia legislature passed.

In the Atlanta suburbs, Michelle Al is the first Chinese American woman elected to the Georgia State Senate. Her district is about 62% non-white, and in redistricting it's transformed to a district that's 52% white. It goes from being a Biden district to a Trump district.

In Ohio, on the congressional map, there are 15 congressional districts. Republicans are favored to win 12 [00:10:00] of those in any given year, democrats only three, which is wildly skewed. In fact, that's about 80% of seats in a state where Republicans that most win about 53% of the vote.

Laboratories of Autocracy – David Pepper – It's the States, Stupid! - The Al Franken Podcast - Air Date 10-29-22

DAVID PEPPER: Gerrymandering is splitting up districts so that outcomes are essentially predetermined. Purging is knocking voters off the rolls for, in Ohio, all sorts of not good reasons. You add it all up and basically they're able to create a system where, the broader will of Ohio is just not reflected in its State

House. Even if the majority doesn't like what that State House is doing, largely cuz of gerrymandering, the people, the state can't change that, and that is why we're seeing a downward spiral.

AL FRANKEN - HOST, THE AL FRANKEN PODCAST: Let's go to the gerrymandering, because what they have done is so frigging effective. Where there's virtually no contested elections in the state. And it's been gerrymandering in such a way that in many states, and maybe this is true [00:11:00] in Ohio, Democrats will win the popular vote if you add up all the people who voted in state legislative races, democrats could have a majority or plurality, and yet there's almost a two to one result in the state legislature of Republicans and Democrats, and that's by virtue of gerrymandering. Now, the state legislature can't write the rules for their own elections, but this was done by, well, you, you call 'em the bunker, right?

DAVID PEPPER: Yeah. It varies in different states, but essentially in most states still, the legislature has a good deal of control, and as you mentioned, they've gotten so much more aggressive and good at it thanks to data and computer technology that, and Wisconsin is the most extreme example, as you said, Democrats won the statewide vote for state legislature in Wisconsin in 2018 by nine points, yet they have a two to one Republican super [00:12:00] majority in that state legislature. As I say that, that's assistant Vladimir Putin would admire or Orban.

AL FRANKEN - HOST, THE AL FRANKEN PODCAST: Do they have a super majority or is that up for grabs here?

DAVID PEPPER: They're two to one in Wisconsin. Wisconsin is one of the worst. In Ohio they do as well. In 2018, Ohio was 50/50 for the state legislative vote and they got a super majority. Pennsylvania, Michigan, again, majority voted for Democrats, yet the gerrymandering gives the Republicans a majority they didn't earn.

AL FRANKEN - HOST, THE AL FRANKEN PODCAST: Also, they can, the state legislatures do, have a say over the congressional gerrymandering, right?

DAVID PEPPER: Yes, and in many states, they do control their own. They pass a bill or there's some hybrid processes, but many states, they control their own maps too. So they literally can affect their own district.

AL FRANKEN - HOST, THE AL FRANKEN PODCAST: But you see in the states you are mentioning like Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and Ohio, Michigan, the gerrymandering [00:13:00] has complete - again, it parallels exactly what you're talking about in the state legislatures, but in their congressional representation in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and Michigan and in Ohio I guess it's closer, Democrats will win the popular vote. If you talk about who voted for a Democrat for Congress, who voted for a Republican for Congress, but the way it's gerrymandering, it's exactly what you're talking about. It's like two to one Republican.

DAVID PEPPER: Yeah. We're a state that in 2012, Obama and Sherrod Brown both won decisively, yet because of the gerrymandering, they had 12 Republicans go to Congress and four Democrats, and that 12 four stayed every single year, all decade, no matter what the voters did.

And that same thing happened in Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania. So yeah, it's truly rigged. And you and I could have looked at the map in 2011, and you and I could have predicted the outcome, almost exactly, of every [00:14:00] race for the next 10 years. Michigan, just to be clear, they got so fed up they did change their constitution so they have an independent commission, but for the most part it's the State House.

AL FRANKEN - HOST, THE AL FRANKEN PODCAST: How did they change their constitution?

DAVID PEPPER: They had a referendum go to ballot and it passed. By the way, we had one go to the ballot, and this is something that I'm still fighting, and our lawless legislature simply ignored the new constitution. Has spent the last year ignoring the Ohio Supreme Court. So right now in Ohio, believe it or not, in just a few weeks, we will have an election on a congressional map that our own state Supreme Court has found to violate the Ohio Constitution. We're about to go through that. So even when you push a reform, these legislatures are so out of whack at this point.

There are hundreds of Marjorie Taylor Greens in all these places. We just don't know their names. In Ohio, they are so over the top that they simply did not follow the court order, and so now we have a map that we will be voting on that our own Supreme Court says violates the Ohio Constitution.

Michigan's got sorted [00:15:00] out some, but yeah, most states, the legislature is still drawing these districts, and they're drawing them with the intensity I'm

describing. Again, a blue state, 50/50 is 12/4 going to Congress. At some point, as you said at the very beginning, not a democracy.

The Fight for Fair Maps - The Takeaway - Air Date 7-18-22

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: Is there a place, a district, a state where this process of map drawing does look truly fair and representative?

ALLISON RIGGS: Yes, California, I think has been doing it right. I think it's the one state this cycle that didn't have any redistricting litigation. For two cycles now they've had a citizen's redistricting commission. Californians apply and go through a process to be selected, to draw their own state legislative and congressional districts. They build a commission with a wide representation from folks across the state from different racial and ethnic backgrounds with different professional experiences, and [00:16:00] people who know the communities impacted by the lines.

It's not necessarily a model that's directly replicable in every state. Certainly, there are legislatures who don't want to replicate that but it's one that I point to as having a great process, very transparent, produced great results.

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: Do you find that the redistricting ends up with more fair results in states where there's a nonpartisan or a bipartisan commission rather than elected officials doing it, or has that not proved to be the all-encompassing solution that some had hoped for?

ALLISON RIGGS: I think the jury is still out on that. I lean towards I've yet to see the evidence that a nonpartisan or bipartisan commission is the solution. It's why I like California, where it's a citizens commission, but what I've seen in too many states with these commissions is they are [00:17:00] political appointees so they're just one step removed from accountability. Now, have I seen evidence that they're any worse than the politicians themselves drawing the maps? No, but I think the jury is still out, particularly when it comes to the impact for communities of color.

I also applaud states who are committed to the great experiment of democracy and trying something new as long as they understand that it may not work exactly as imagined. There has to be flexibility retained to ensure protection of

historically disenfranchised communities. I think the system we have right now is so broken that there does need to be some experimentation into what can work.

Failing (Red)States - Ralph Nader Radio Hour - Air Date 3-4-23

RALPH NADER - HOST, RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR: You talk about Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves, that's T A T E R E E V E S.

He's a real... almost [00:18:00] beyond cruel and vicious, describe how blatant he is, and he brags about it.

WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT: This is one of these states that cuts taxes over and over again. For instance, 40% of Mississippi's population is obese. It has the second highest diabetes mortality rate, and the second highest cancer rate.

So to counter that problem in 2016 Governor Phil Bryant, who was Tate Reeve's predecessor, cut the State health Department budget by \$40 million. Which included an \$8 million reduction for the University of Mississippi medical center. At the same time they pushed through, between 2012 and 2017, Phil Bryant and Tate Reeves pushed through 51 tax cuts or tax breaks that cost the state \$577 million in revenue.

In fiscal year 2017 alone, the cuts cost \$324 million. So they're jeopardizing the lives and the wellbeing of their citizens to pour money into the [00:19:00] coffers of big corporations. Claiming that, by doing that, they bring more companies to Mississippi; but study after study has shown that companies don't make decisions on where to base facilities on the basis of tax cuts.

They look at how educated the population is, how good the infrastructure is. So this is just a giveaway to corporations, the same corporations who shower people like Tate Reeves and Phil Bryant with election donations.

RALPH NADER - HOST, RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR: Also you point out these outside secret money lobbyists; like the Koch brothers, the Dick and Betsy DeVos family, the Richard Scaif Mellon interests, and their front groups have really had great success in southern legislatures and getting bills through.

It's really astounding how specific their success was. As you point out in your book; they actually, beginning in 2015, blocked the [00:20:00] creation of

public transit systems in Nashville, Little Rock, Phoenix, and more than a dozen other communities around the country. They paid people to knock on doors, and put ads on TV, and defeated them.

These are oil interests, they don't want public transit. It is pretty granular the way they've entered these southern states. I'll bet you some of our listeners are now saying, how do these lawmakers and governors get away with it? Because all the ordinary people, not just African-Americans or Hispanics; all the poor whites, all the Hispanic, low income African American are being harmed, deprived, excluded and treated badly.

So even with the gerrymandering, how do these legislatures keep finding themselves with cruel and vicious lawmakers that keep getting reelected?

WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT: I think part of it is in a lot of the red states, a lot of the red states have large areas that [00:21:00] are news deserts. Where if there are newspapers, they've been decimated by cuts and layoffs. They're owned by private equity firms that just strip everything they can out of them.

So there's not a lot of media coverage of these things. CNN, and even the New York Times, and Washington Post don't go in a great deal about what's happening in individual states, especially if they're smaller states.

I don't think the public even realizes that these things are happening. One of the things that's a big part of the legislative success of Republicans in these states is a group called the American Legislative Exchange Council. Which according to Gordon Laffer, the American Legislative Exchange Council drafts uniform legislation that is proposed in State House after State House in Republican states across the country. According to Gordon Laffer, each year between 2000-2010, a hundred ALEC Bills became law. As of 2017 ALEC [00:22:00] members included 2000 state legislators, a quarter of the nation's total.

ALEC has gotten money from the Koch brothers, from the same dark money billionaires that you talked about, and they're just flooding money. A lot of this money goes into advertisements, TV advertisements that distorts reality, but fires up the base. I think they're funding mass ignorance, and that's how these people are able to get away with it.

RALPH NADER - HOST, RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR: They seem to have so dispossessed and discouraged regular people in those states that they have lower rates of civic engagement. They don't have the initiative referendum recall, the way some of the Western states have. They have often great difficulty

in using their franchise as voters, as was pointed out. The southern governors and lawmakers have become very demagogic; distracting attention from the ordinary people's livelihood issues, into things like critical race theory supposedly being taught in some schools, [00:23:00] transgender issues, and so forth.

They've been very clever. DeSantis in Florida has been very clever doing that, and they're good at propaganda. They keep saying, "Hey, if things are so bad in the South, why is the migration pattern in the United States overwhelmingly from north to south?" Can you answer that?

WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT: It is because of two reasons; warmer weather, and cheaper real estate. The appeal of cheaper real estate is not gonna last much longer because, in Texas and Florida, real estate is increasing rapidly.

In the book, I quote a state official in Florida who is candid; people are coming here because they can sell their houses in the Northeast and Midwest, and they can buy much more of a house here, and it's warm. That's the reason people have been going to the states forever, and that hasn't changed.

It does help that there's no income tax. So wealthy people may gravitate there because of that reason. Families, if they're going there, they're finding [00:24:00] the schools are inferior, the healthcare is inferior. I think we're gonna see a slowing of that migration as property values increase.

Property values in Austin are through the roof, and in parts of Florida. I think we're gonna see the slowing of that.

RALPH NADER - HOST, RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR: Governor DeSantis brags about Florida being a low tax state but, as you say, the truth is that Florida has one of the most upside down tax systems in a nation due to its overdependence on sales taxes.

In Florida, a worker making minimum wage spends a greater share of their hard-earned cash paying state and local sales taxes than a millionaire in Florida. Yet whenever there is a referendum in Florida to raise the minimum wage, it wins overwhelmingly against all kinds of opposition by the fast food retail chains; McDonald's and others plastering the television.

It doesn't matter, when the people are given a voice, direct democracy, [00:25:00] without having to go through Tallahassee, they vote progressive. How do you explain that?

WILLIAM KLEINKNECHT: Because when they have something specific in front of them, their thinking isn't clouded by the issue of abortion, and guns, and critical race theory.

That they're asked, do you want better healthcare? Do you want higher wages? Of course they're going to vote for that. I think the Republican leaders do everything they can to prevent these referendums from getting on the ballot but, now and then they are unsuccessful, they get on the ballot and the people vote.

Ending my sm sabbatical since Houston is once again under attack by the party of “small government” - princewilliamhtx - Air Date 3-15-23

WILLIAM: There's this unspoken tug of war between Republican states in the South as to who can be essentially the most fucked up state in the union. West Virginia Republicans want to marry kids and Florida Republicans want to steal trans youth. Tennessee Republicans just said that, Hey, it's cool to discriminate against LGBTQ, we don't care, we just wanna marry kids. Meanwhile, Ascertaining that it's drag shows and trans people who are the real [00:26:00] predators against children.

But the thing is, all of this is a distraction from failed Republican policies, and Texas is a great example of that, because I woke up this morning to find that the state that I come from and I hail from in the city of Houston, they announced, along with the Republican Party, the party that prides themselves in being supporters of small governments, is taking full control... they are seizing the entire school District of Houston, ISD. Yes, the fourth most diverse city in the United States, in the largest school district in the state of Texas, is now under the full control of the Republican Party.

So what does this mean? What does this mean for the people of Houston? Well, for one, it means that they are now firing every elected official that was put in office by the city of Houston. Every person that went to the polls and voted now has their voice completely eliminated because the Republican party said, "no, we don't agree with you." Something, something fascism, am I right?

But what else does that mean? It means that the state of [00:27:00] Texas now has full control on what is being taught to the children of Houston, because they know better than you do. They know better that your children shouldn't be

reading certain books. It sounds like fascism, am I right? They don't want your children learning about civil rights. They don't want your children learning about LGBTQ. They don't want your children learning anything other than what they deem is necessary for your children. Sounds like fascism, am I right?

But it also means that they can now control where public funds, taxpayer money, goes. So instead of it going to public education, it can now go to private charter schools that teach Christian ideology.

Wherever you live in America, here's why you should care about Governor Abbott's removal of school board members in Houston. - isiahrmartin - Air Date 3-16-23

ISIAH MARTIN: I wanna bring you up to speed on what just happened. Right here in Texas, governor Abbot's administration has just removed all nine democratically elected members of the school board here in the Houston Independent School District. Now stop. If you don't live here in Houston, I bet you're wondering why should you care? Follow me closely.

These school board [00:28:00] members are elected officials whose power was stripped from them by the state. This is a trend. In Florida, when a district attorney spoke out against a governor, he was removed from office. In Texas, when you don't play ball with the governor, and you won't play ball with banning books, you get removed from office.

Why? Because these governor's unpopular policies cannot win in the big cities, they're not stopping with a loss in a local election. All that's happening is that they're engineering new ways to remove the winner from office. No matter where you live, or who you vote for, what part do you support, this should be alarming, because removing elected officials, because you don't get your way sets a dangerous precedent. Because trust me when I tell you, if you believe that this is gonna end with down ballot races, well, I got some oceanfront property to sell you in Idaho.

“Plantation Politics”: How White Mississippi Lawmakers Want to Seize

Power in Majority-Black Jackson - Democracy Now! - Air Date 3-9-23

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: Mayor Lumumba, please start off by explaining what these bills are about.

MAYOR CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA: Simply put, these bills are an [00:29:00] attack on Black leadership, a way to seize power of a majority-Black city. Which cannot be seized democratically through an election, so state lawmakers are attempting to legislate their way into control of the city.

This bill is part and parcel of a larger effort. Which not only attempts to take over the judicial process; we've seen efforts to take over our water system, now that we've received over nearly \$800 million in federal funding to contribute towards its repair, former efforts to not only take over our school district, but also to take over our airport. This is what we're seeing, not only in Jackson, but in less obvious ways there are efforts around the country to do that. I've talked to colleagues or comrades of mine in St. Louis, and Mayor Tishaura Jones. I know a similar effort is afoot in Kansas City, [00:30:00] Missouri.

It is apartheid, as we have called it, it is plantation politics. It is used under the Trojan horse of public safety. First and foremost, a statistical analysis determined that Jackson may not even have the highest crime rate in the state of Mississippi when you get into it by scale. Beyond that, if there's a true emphasis or concern over the issues of public safety; then the state can make investments in areas where we've asked them to. First and foremost, their own state crime lab has a backlog that prevents cases from going forward to trial. Justice delayed is justice denied, as we have known it to be. They have not supported the request of our police department in ballistic technology that helps them associate guns involved in other crimes. They haven't supported our real-time command center that we've asked them, which is a 21st century tool used to support that. [00:31:00] Nor have they supported our efforts of credible messenger or violence interruption training. We've gone to Wells Fargo Bank and National League of Cities, who have actually been the ones to give us seed money so that we can make sure that we have additional interventions towards the issues of crime.

Lastly, I will say that when you do a truly intensive study of what the crimes or the violence in Jackson persist of; you find that it is largely based on interpersonal conflict, which is very difficult to police. So simply having an occupying force that abuses community does not make us any safer. Over the

last six months, there have actually been at least seven officer-involved incidents for the Capitol Complex Police. Not only JPD, but the surrounding jurisdictions over the last two to three years have not amounted to that number of officer-involved incidents.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: This reminds me so much of what happened in Michigan when [00:32:00] the white Republican, governor at the time, appointed emergency managers especially for Black cities. Of course, we know what happened in Flint with the water supply being disconnected and being wholly contaminated. The governor there was Rick Snyder. Can you clarify what you just said? About you think this started with the water supply of Jackson, which has been so problematic. Now getting this influx of state and federal money, that the state wants to grab the money.

MAYOR CHOKWE ANTAR LUMUMBA: Well it started even before that; the first effort, or obvious effort, would have been over the takeover of our airport. Which we have been fighting for the better part of five to six years now.

With respect to our water system, we have had decades of deferred maintenance and neglect. This is an area where I have to give my predecessors their just due; in that they have all asked [00:33:00] for resources in order to help with Jackson's water system, and the issues of capital improvement. We have nearly 50% loss in our system, among other capital investments that have to be made. As we have gone to the state Legislature each and every year asking for support, and saying that it's not a matter of "if" but a matter of "when" these things will fail. They have displayed a deliberate indifference or willful neglect of the city of Jackson.

We had to go through extraordinary means to go through the federal government and working with the EPA. Giving credit where it is due, the Biden administration provided collectively nearly \$800 million. Which now we have a third-party administrator that we're working in conjunction with, through a agreed order, to make certain that we can see the prioritization and sustainability of our system.

Now that we have found [00:34:00] ways to solve our problems for ourselves, the state has taken a negative outlook on that. This all comes on the heels of our ability to get those resources; where they not only attacked the effort to take over our water system, but you see simultaneously an effort to take over our judicial process. So it's not just attack on the city of Jackson. It's an attack on the Black judges in Hinds County. It's an attack on the Black prosecutor. It's

simply stating that they want to seize control over all of the points of governance that we now have control over.

I would lastly say that Trey Lamar, the representative who initiated or introduced the bill, when asked why he believed that these judges should be appointed rather than elected, his response was, “Well we simply want the best and the brightest.” That feeds into the [00:35:00] notion, to the false narrative of Black people being inferior, and incapable of choosing the leadership which best represents their interests.

These Republicans are Trying to LITERALLY Send Your Kids Back To The Mines - The Young Turks - Air Date 2-11-23

ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS: Republican state lawmakers in Iowa have introduced a pretty reprehensible child labor bill that would legalize minors as young as 14 years old to work in jobs that include things like, no big deal—just a little bit of manual labor—stuff like mining, logging, animal slaughter houses, but those kinds of jobs.

I mean, what could go wrong? It's not like the United States has a history, a brutal dark history with child labor, which we'll get to in just a moment. But first, a few details about this legislation. Senate File 167, introduced by State Senator Jason Schultz, would expand job op, expand job opportunities available to teens, including letting children as young as 14 work in freezers, and meat coolers, and [00:36:00] loading and unloading light tools under certain conditions.

Now, there is a very real reason why Republican lawmakers in this state in Iowa are pushing for this. The tight labor market might have something to do with it. Employers not wanting to pay the workplace compensation for anyone who might get injured, that's another part of this. It's just so gross how far companies with the help of Republicans, with Republicans aiding and abetting them, how far they'll go just to get their hands on cheap labor, but more importantly labor they can take advantage of, and that's what I see this as.

Now, this is a proposal, it hasn't passed yet, we're gonna keep an eye on it, but what else do we know about it? The proposed law contains an entirely new section that would allow the Iowa Workforce Development and State

Department of Education heads to make exceptions to any of the prohibited jobs for teens between the ages of [00:37:00] 14-17 participating in work-based learning, or a school or employer administered work-related program.

So not only would these employers get away with paying these minors less for these incredibly dangerous jobs, but workman's comp - that wouldn't apply to teenagers who are harmed in the process of doing their jobs. So if they're working at a meat packing plant and something goes awry and they're injured as a result, well, the way this bill is written would ensure that the companies would not have to deal with any lawsuit or liability.

So before we get to those details, I do wanna just give you a sense of what it was like when we allowed for child labor to be carried out in this country, because luckily labor unions fought hard to reverse that practice, and now you have Republican lawmakers clawing back to a time in [00:38:00] America where this is what we experienced with children.

ARCHIVE NEWS CLIP: The kinds of jobs you would find children working in ranged from the mines, the factories, the cotton mills, to working out on the streets selling newspapers. Injuries, even deaths, were very common among children.

The parents would often say that they needed the income that their children brought in, that that was what allowed them to continue to survive. A number of parents were advocates for child labor and their children thought that that was the way life was.

ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS: Well, luckily that changed. There are still companies today who break child labor rules and regulations, and they get fined for it, and then they do it again because the profits they make from taking advantage of vulnerable people outweighs the fines they end up paying.

We should probably [00:39:00] do something about that to ensure that we're actually enforcing our laws against child labor. But nonetheless, as I mentioned earlier, the thing that makes this proposals particularly disgusting is that knowing that these jobs are dangerous, knowing that these jobs could get these kids hurt, republicans wrote the proposal in a way to ensure that should they get hurt, the companies employing them wouldn't have to face any type of lawsuit or liability for it. "It exempts businesses from civil liability if a minor is sickened, injured, or killed due to the company's negligence." So again, it takes workman's comp out of the equation entirely.

The bill, in addition, would allow 16 and 17 year olds with the written permission of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian to serve alcohol to people who are drinking it on the premises of a business. It [00:40:00] is insane. And what should terrify you, is that when Republicans say they wanna do something and when they have the backing, the financial backing, the political backing of big business, if they're persistent enough, more often than not, they get what they want.

And we should be concerned about that because we do not have what this country had previously to fight back against child labor, and that is strong labor militancy, labor unions. All of that has been decimated considerably.

How Moore v. Harper Could Reshape Democracy - The Takeaway- Air Date 12-8-22

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: What is this fringe theory, this independent state legislature theory?

ALLISON RIGGS: First let me say, there's about 18 versions of this fringe theory floating around. Mr. Thompson, and his friends in the North Carolina General Assembly, can't seem to settle on one of them. Which was part of why yesterday's arguments lasted three hours. At core, it's a theory that the founders [00:41:00] gave all of the power for redistricting, and for running federal elections, to the state legislatures and the state legislatures alone. Even though the founders knew that judicial review was a critical part of how government at the state and federal level worked.

It's a silly argument because the founders in the Constitution mentioned Congress countless times, without every single time explicitly saying, "Congress subject to review by the United States Supreme Court." In essence; they want an unchecked, unfettered legislature who can make rules for federal elections, including districts where the protections of the state constitution have no effect.

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: Allison, there is three branches in the two levels. On the one hand if we do read the justices primarily as ideologues, or primarily as partisans, then that connection between the [00:42:00] state legislatures and the federal bench makes sense to me. If we read them as potentially interested in their branch of government, then wouldn't

they be reluctant to strip state courts from this capacity to oversee state legislatures relative to elections?

ALLISON RIGGS: You're exactly right, which is why this case has been so frustrating to us. If you take the justices at their judicial philosophy, and their precedent; this is a case that should give them great qualms. Four years ago I argued the partisan gerrymandering case that came out of North Carolina, *Rucho v. Common Cause*. It's important to remember this case didn't start last year, this has been the culmination of almost 15 years of back-and-forth, tug and pull on power in state legislatures and Congress in North Carolina.

Three years ago, when the Supreme Court issued the *Rucho* opinion, all nine justices [00:43:00] said, "Partisan gerrymandering is a pernicious problem, we're not condemning you to scream into the void. Here are two options that you have. You can go to Congress or you can look to state constitutions as interpreted by state courts for protections from partisan gerrymandering."

The elections clause existed three years ago. It's not plausible to me that the court didn't understand the implications of what it said. At core too, when the US Supreme Court decided it didn't want federal courts taking up the issue of partisan gerrymandering it said, "Look, we're one court, there are 50 states. This is a very political issue. It's nuanced by state. We want to decentralize and de-federalized dealing with this problem."

There's a 10th amendment aspect to this that should be eminently in the [00:44:00] court's mind, that this is something that should be left to the states to deal with. Then if you look at the elections clause; there isn't a textualist or an originalist interpretation of the clause that doesn't support letting judicial review as it normally happens, happen in these cases. It's just very challenging because knowing these justices, how they've ruled, what their judicial philosophy is, this really should not be a close case.

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: Can you just lay out for me this notion that partisan gerrymandering is a pernicious problem? What has happened in this country over the past 20 years relative to partisan gerrymandering?

ARI BERMAN: Gerrymandering has gotten a lot worse. It really got a lot worse after the 2010 election when Republicans took control of so many key states, so many key battlegrounds like North [00:45:00] Carolina, Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, et cetera. They took those states over with the explicit goal of gerrymandering them to basically reduce any competition. To essentially turn

swing states, purple states, into deep red states at the state legislature. They've been remarkably effective at that. In some places the composition has changed, but in some places, the composition hasn't changed at all. Republicans still control the general assembly of North Carolina. They still control the general assembly of Wisconsin; even as lots of other statewide races, which are not gerrymandered, have shifted.

Gerrymandering is such a big deal because when republicans control the state legislature, they have power to do so many other things. That's why it matters. They have power to restrict a woman's right to choose. They have power to let anyone carry a gun wherever they want. They have power not to expand Medicaid, or do all these other popular [00:46:00] things.

They're basically insulated from any political competition, any kind of accountability. If they do unpopular things, there's very little recourse to challenge that. What's so distressing about this case is, the Supreme Court has already said that you can't challenge partisan gerrymandering in federal court.

If they say you can't challenge partisan gerrymandering in state courts, or they make it very difficult to do so; there's basically no recourse to challenge gerrymandering at all at the federal or state level. That turns state legislatures into king-like authorities. When you have king-like authority, you are going to act like a king or a queen, and probably not a benevolent one. It's going to open the door to even more anti-democratic actions by these state legislatures, if they get their way in this case.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders Rolls Back Child Labor Protections in Arkansas - The Young Turks - Air Date 3-10-23

JOHN IADAROLA - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS: It's already happening, it's becoming much more common that kids are working in these dangerous environments. They're getting burned by chemicals. They're working with industrial equipment, razor sharp [00:47:00] saws.

They're working as animals are being torn to shreds heavy machinery. You're gonna see more of it thanks to people like Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee, who passed a bill in Arkansas that makes it easier for companies to hire younger and younger employees. Under this law, the Youth Hiring Act of 2023, children

under 16 do not have to obtain permission from the Division of Labor to get a job.

They will no longer need to get an employment certificate; which verified their age, described their work and work schedule, and included written consent from a parent or guardian. They say this isn't a big deal because it's just gonna streamline the process, and why do the parents have to get involved in all that?

Which is weird because parents need to get involved in a whole bunch of stuff when it comes to kids, according to Republicans. Anything involving their gender identity or sexuality parents need to be up in that; but when it comes to them potentially being exposed to deadly chemicals, or dangerous machinery at the age of 15 or 16 years old, well flame on. [00:48:00] What do you think?

CENK UYGUR - HOST, THE YOUNG TURKS: So let's talk about the power propaganda as usual. They make it seem like, "oh it's just your kid getting a summer job at Dairy Queen, and we're just getting rid of the red tape." Your kid that's getting the summer job, it's super easy for you to write them out and sign the letter saying, "oh yeah, they're allowed to get one, it's their summer job, their happy to have it, good work ethic."

That already exists, you can already do that. This is so that you don't have to get the parents permission, so they could exploit the most vulnerable children. Do you think they're working at the Dairy Queen? No, they're working at meat packing plants. Over a hundred kids at a meat packing plant; and they're cleaning up severed heads, blood that drenches the floor, clean the axes, and a device called a head splitter.

14 years old, getting the worst wages by the way, that explains it. Why do they all of a sudden want kids to work? Because they [00:49:00] ran out of women. Wait, what? What do you mean? First it was mainly males who worked, and then women got introduced into the work force. That's great, it gives them the option of working, et cetera.

Then it wasn't an option anymore because everybody needed two incomes to survive cuz corporations had squeezed every penny out of our houses, and our families. So now they're like, now bringing your kids. Let's go. Let's go. It's time to exploit them. I don't want 'em sitting around there's a 13 year old, get 'em into the meat packing plant.

Now you're all gonna work for me. You're all gonna get the worst possible salary; so that if you put all 3, 4, 5 of you together, all of your salaries together,

you could barely subsist. That's the corporate plan. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who's a corporate goon extraordinaire, is happy to exploit the children of Arkansas on behalf of her donors.

Missouri law barring police from enforcing federal gun laws creates confusion - PBS NewsHour - Air Date 2-26-23

JOHN YANG: Missouri has some of the most permissive gun laws in the nation. The state doesn't require background checks, and doesn't require a permit to carry a concealed weapon. [00:50:00] A state law passed in 2021 even makes it hard for police to enforce federal gun laws. Gabrielle Hays is the NewsHour Communities correspondent, she's based in St. Louis. Gabby, what is this law and how does it work?

GABRIELE HAYES: John, essentially, as you know that this law was passed in June of 2021, Governor Mike Parson signed it. Essentially what it does is it prohibits state and local agencies from helping the federal government enforce federal gun laws that, if by Missouri standards, are an infringement on a person's right to bear arms, their Second Amendment right. This was a law that was challenged almost immediately, and it does come with some penalties.

JOHN YANG: What are the penalties?

GABRIELE HAYES: The one that you will see most often, is that a violation of this law could come with a \$50,000 penalty on law enforcement. That is something that [00:51:00] is noted in some of the pushback against this legislation, and also in feedback from law enforcement across the state.

JOHN YANG: You mentioned that it has been challenged. Who's challenging it? And where do those challenges stand?

GABRIELE HAYES: Those challenges are ongoing. On a state level we know that St. Louis City County, Jackson County, and other counties across the state, other cities across the state have joined in on a lawsuit pushing back on the act.

Also, last year, the Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against the Second Amendment Preservation Act. Calling it invalid, attorney General Merrick Garland said that it impedes on law enforcement operations in Missouri, and their ability to do their jobs.

JOHN YANG: You mentioned hampering law enforcement's ability to do their jobs. How does this work in practice?

GABRIELE HAYES: I think the answer to that is twofold. I think if you were [00:52:00] to Google this law and law enforcement, you would see stories from across state of Missouri; from different counties and cities where law enforcement officers are talking to their local journalist, or seeking clarification from the court, and explaining what this law means to them. The ways in which it makes it difficult for them to do their jobs. Deciding whether or not they should be cooperating with law enforcement, because law enforcement agencies have partnerships with federal agencies. So when this law came down, we have stories of not only law enforcement officers, but also prosecutors having the conversation of, "OK, what do we do now?", and I think that that has been a big part of it. Also, violating this law could come with a \$50,000 fine.

We've had law enforcement officials in our states asking for [00:53:00] clarity on what it means specifically, and how exactly it translates to their day to day work.

JOHN YANG: Is the sticking point, that it's not every federal gun law? It's federal gun laws that, in their view, infringe on second amendment rights, and it's interpreting that?

GABRIELE HAYES: Yes, so essentially, it's any law, rule, or regulation that Missouri considers an infringement on a person's right to bear arms.

Tennessee legislator shocks with lynching suggestion - Alex Wagner Tonight- Air Date 3-3-23

ALEX WAGNER - HOST, ALEX WAGNER TONIGHT: While Florida Governor Ron DeSantis works to legally censor teachings about historic and systemic racism in his state. An incident in Tennessee this week is showing us what can happen when people disregard that history. On Tuesday, a bill in the state legislature that would allow inmates to be executed by firing squad was brought up for debate before the Tennessee House's Criminal Justice committee.

One Republican lawmaker, state representative Paul Sherrell, expressed support for the bill but felt it didn't go far enough.

REP. PAUL SHERRELL: Now I [00:54:00] was just wondering about... could I put amendment on that? It would include hanging by a tree.

ALEX WAGNER - HOST, ALEX WAGNER TONIGHT: An amendment to allow lynchings as a method of state sponsored execution. Representative Sherrell either somehow didn't know this history, or chose to recall it on purpose. Lynch mobs in Confederate states killed more than 2,800 people, about one person a week, between 1882 and 1930.

214 people were lynched in the state of Tennessee alone during this period. State representative Sherrell has since apologized, and says he regrets using "very poor judgment." His Democratic colleague, state representative G.A. Hardaway, had this to say.

REP. G. A. HARDAWAY: When I heard the statement, I was sad and I was mad at the same time. I couldn't believe that I was hearing that. Out of [00:55:00] all committees, a justice committee, the irony, a justice committee.

I don't need to hear anybody talk about, "It wasn't me, that I wasn't alive back then."

I wasn't alive back then either, but I can assure you that multi-generational trauma still exists. Not in only myself, but in all black folks who are in America today.

ALEX WAGNER - HOST, ALEX WAGNER TONIGHT: This to me seems like such an expression of why we need to talk about systemic racism, and historic racism. It also is a full expression of what the right wants to be able to say uncensored, unfettered.

Why do I have to worry about what the snowflake liberals think of me? I'm gonna go out there with my vigilante justice ideas, history be damned.

JELANI COBB: It's the worst enactment of the idea that those who fail to learn from history are [00:56:00] doomed to repeat it. As I point out, if you want a really depressing interpretation of that, is that sometimes we repeat history precisely because people have learned from it.

Meaning that there are people who observe the worst of the past and want to actually drag that into the present. When you look at the history of that state, the indefensible Memphis Riot of 1866; where black women were raped in mass, and black men were murdered in the aftermath of the Civil War.

The anti-lynching crusade that Ida B. Wells, the early journalist who fought against lynching, began when three of her friends were lynched in the state of Tennessee. We had walked through the whole blood soaked history, of what happened in that state; and other Confederate states, and other states that were outside of the Confederacy for that matter.

It is a derogatory insult to the [00:57:00] people who actually know what happened in that history. Who are the ancestors, rather the descendants, of the people who suffered in that way.

ALEX WAGNER - HOST, ALEX WAGNER TONIGHT: I think the representative Hardaway brings up this really important point. It's not just that no one should be ignorant, but saying things like that continues a cycle of multi-generational trauma. Just the utterance of that alone is wrong. I think people don't... there's no conception of the human cost of even proposing an idea like that on the justice committee.

That's where the impunity has to... that's precisely why we're trying, that's why you have diversity and inclusion training, right? That's why you teach people history. That's why we talk about racism, is so that people understand how totally unacceptable it is to even...think it. The idea of suggesting lynching as a method of execution seems unfathomable in the year 2023, but here's where we are.

JELANI COBB: That's where we are.

Re-indigenization - VoicedMailer Daniel

VOICEDMAILER DANIEL: Hi Jay,

While listening to an episode of The Lesley Riddoch Podcast, I was struck by the interviewee's use of [00:58:00] the term "re-indigenization"; meaning to become indigenous again. More specifically, to develop a relationship of, commitment to, and connection with, and responsibility for the land in which one resides. He applies this concept to Scottish communities taking back control of their land from non-Scottish landlords, learning how to succeed at this by taking inspiration from leading members of indigenous communities, and thereby regaining lost aspects of their identity. This concept is resonating with me in several ways, and I wonder if this concept might resonate with Best of the Left listeners as well.

As a new immigrant to Scotland, with hopes of making it my permanent home, I feel tantalized by the possibility of feeling truly at home on a land and in a culture despite having no claim of heritage. As a Jew born in the US and raised Orthodox, I never felt that I could call America home as long as Christian supremacy ruled the land. As a person who immigrated to Israel in my early adulthood, I was seeking a land in which I could truly call myself indigenous. As a person who emigrated from Israel in middle age quite disillusioned with the history of its modern statehood, I'm [00:59:00] still desperately seeking a shred of hope that the Jewish people can one day find ways to forge connection with their homeland without denying the equally valid connection that Palestinians have with that same land. To break the cycle of abuse rather than continue re-enacting and repeating the colonial oppression and exclusionary ethnic supremacy that victimized us in such similar ways just one generation ago. As a child of a convert to Judaism, I witnessed at close range how a community can fail to treat naturalized members like my mother with full equality, and how being treated as a second-class citizen can damage a person's psyche. In short, the idea of "re-indigenization" evokes in me both so much hope for healing, and so much fear of failure to heal.

If this interview with Alistair McIntosh somehow contributes to an episode of Best of the Left, I'll be quite happy to have helped.

Final comments on how to fix the states

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today starting with David Pakman, speaking with David Pepper, about the Republican party overtly mirroring the authoritarian tactics of Hungary's Victor Orban. More Perfect Union highlighted Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and [01:00:00] Ohio's gerrymandering efforts. The Al Franken podcast also spoke with David Pepper about the impact of unearned super majorities.

The Takeaway highlighted California as a state that is doing redistricting genuinely well, thanks to a citizen's commission taking it out of the hands of politicians entirely. The Ralph Nader Radio Hour focused on the management of red states and the harm caused to people.

Prince William H. Texas and Isaiah R. Martin, both on TikTok, drew attention to the state government of Texas stripping power from the local school board of Houston. Democracy Now looked at Mississippi looking to take over the local governance of the progressive majority Black city of Jackson. The Young Turks highlighted the effort in Iowa to further legalize child labor, and The Takeaway explained the independent state legislature theory; which is designed to make

state legislatures unaccountable even, to the courts. The theory is now going before the Supreme Court.

That's what everybody heard, but members [01:01:00] also heard bonus clips from The Young Turks reporting on Arkansas doing away with parental permitting of child labor. The PBS NewsHour reported on gun laws in Arkansas that directly challenge federal gun laws. Alex Wagner tonight highlighted the story out of Tennessee of the Republican politician asking to bring back state sanctioned lynching.

To hear that, and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly to the new members-only podcast feed that you'll receive; sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support, or shoot me an email requesting a financial hardship membership because we don't let a lack of funds stand in the way of hearing more information.

Now I just want to connect a few dots that were mentioned today, but not explicitly connected. Michigan was mentioned; their state government had been controlled by Republicans for decades, until Democrats took back both chambers just last year in 2022. I just wanted to draw a clear line from the referendum [01:02:00] they held to implement an independent commission on redistricting, resulting in a fair electoral map, without gerrymandering. Which allowed Democrats the possibility of being elected to the majority.

Ultimately, showing fruits for those efforts by them winning that majority. Then news from the past couple of weeks show that they have been using their newfound power to work on repealing Michigan's union busting right to work law, the state abortion ban, while expanding civil rights to the LGBTQ community, and tackling gun safety.

In short, this is what democracy looks like when elections are held on a level playing field. The path is clear enough, every state needs to do everything it can to undo the stranglehold of gerrymandering. In many cases, this will take the form of citizen led referendums calling for citizens commissions to be put in charge of [01:03:00] drawing state districts.

So if there's a campaign to do that in your state, join it; and if there isn't, start one. Lastly, I have a quick message from a listener who wrote in a few weeks ago before we published episode 1546 on decolonization and re-indigenization. As I mentioned in that episode, I had already been thinking about those topics for years.

This message you're about to hear did help push me to prioritize turning it into an episode. I meant to share this message earlier, but honestly forgot, so better late than never.

VOICEDMAILER DANIEL: Hi Jay,

While listening to an episode of The Lesley Riddoch Podcast, I was struck by the interviewee's use of the term "re-indigenization"; meaning to become indigenous again. More specifically to develop a relationship of, commitment to, and connection with, and responsibility for the land in which one resides. He applies this concept to Scottish communities taking back control of their land from non-Scottish landlords, learning how [01:04:00] to succeed at this by taking inspiration from leading members of indigenous communities, and thereby regaining lost aspects of their identity. This concept is resonating with me in several ways, and I wonder if this concept might resonate with Best of the Left listeners as well.

As a new immigrant to Scotland, with hopes of making it my permanent home. I feel tantalized by the possibility of feeling truly at home on a land and in a culture despite having no claim of heritage. As a Jew born in the US and raised Orthodox, I never felt that I could call America home as long as Christian supremacy ruled the land. As a person who immigrated to Israel in my early adulthood, I was seeking a land in which I could truly call myself indigenous. As a person who emigrated from Israel in middle age quite disillusioned with the history of its modern statehood, I'm still desperately seeking a shred of hope that the Jewish people can one day find ways to forge connection with their homeland without denying the equally valid connection that Palestinians have with that same land. To break the cycle of abuse rather than continue re-enacting and repeating the colonial oppression, and exclusionary [01:05:00] ethnic supremacy, that victimized us in such similar ways just one generation ago. As a child of a convert to Judaism, I witnessed at close range how a community can fail to treat naturalized members like my mother with full equality, and how being treated as a second-class citizen can damage a person's psyche. In short, the idea of "re-indigenization" evokes in me both so much hope for healing, and so much fear of failure to heal.

If this interview with Alistair McIntosh somehow contributes to an episode of Best of the Left, I'll be quite happy to have helped.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Thanks for that message. I think it basically sums up one of the greatest needs for all people. Hence, my concern with the concept of alienation highlighted in that episode.

If you haven't already heard episode 1546, please do check it out. I'm quite proud of it. That and episode 1500, going back a little ways farther, if you haven't heard that. I stuffed nearly every smart idea I could think of, everything I'd come across in the past 20 years, into that one episode. So check that one out too.[01:06:00]

That is going to be it for today. As always, you can keep the comments coming in by leaving us a voicemail, or sending a text message to 2029993991, or you can keep it old school by emailing me to Jay@bestoftheleft.com. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show, and participation in our bonus episodes.

Thanks to the Transcriptionist Trio, Ken, Brian, and La Wendy for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, and bonus show co-hosting. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member, or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.com/support, through our Patreon page, or from right inside the Apple Podcast app.

Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good, and often funny, bonus episodes. In addition to there being extra content, no ads, and chapter markers in all of our [01:07:00] regular episodes, all through your regular podcast player. You can continue the discussion by joining our discord community, there's a link to join in the show notes.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC; my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast, coming to you twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.