

#1432 Wishing Cuba well in one breath, enforcing the embargo in the next

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left Podcast*, in which we shall take a look at the antigovernment protests in Cuba in the context of decades of anticommunist propaganda in the US and our punishing embargo intended to destabilize Cuba to the point of governmental collapse.

Clips today are from *Democracy Now!*, *The Majority Report*, *Past Present*, *TED-ED*, *Second Thought*, and *Now & Then*.

We Just Want the Basics - Rare Protests in Cuba Amid Deep Economic Crisis, Ongoing U.S. Blockade - Democracy Now! - Air Date 7-14-21

JUAN GONZALEZ: [00:00:26] And, I wanted to ask you about the impact, this mention of the over 200 new sanctions that were imposed during the Trump era, that the Biden administration has so far, not yet rolled back, and also the COVID situation. There has been a resurgence of COVID, or actually a new surge in COVID in Cuba, but it's still relatively small from what I can tell, so I'm wondering, how big an impact has been this surge of COVID, and also, could you detail a little bit more about these sanctions. What were the kinds of sanctions that Trump imposed that did not exist previously?

DANIEL MONTERO: [00:01:06] First of all, the Trump administration, what they did in terms of sanctions on Cuba, first of all, it came as a shock because we had just come out of [inaudible] in those last couple of years of his presidency, and, we were all very hopeful that this re-engagement policy, because it was having very good consequences on our economy, especially when it comes to tourism.

And then tourism is one of the first areas in which we can see the consequences of what the Trump administration did. They basically rolled out, all of the policies Obama was adopting, and they started applying more than 200 sanctions, like tourism. If they ban cruise ships, they forbid flights to other cities that wasn't Havana. That had a toll on our tourism revenue.

Then, the other sanctions, they applied an oil blockade. At some point in Cuba, we had a major oil crisis because the United States was stopping the oil that came into the country. And not just that, what the embargo as a whole means is that it is harder for Cuba, in many cases impossible, to do business with other countries, with companies. So that makes it very hard to access food, medicine, the basics.

Now, when you bring that into a pandemic in which the Trump administration did not slow down at all, they actually increased what they were doing, this causes even bigger harm because then the COVID response of the country was harmed by the policies of the Trump administration.

And it is very important to understand that this war that the United States has been waging against Cuba, just because Donald Trump is no longer president, it doesn't mean it's no

longer in place, because even though Joe Biden is six months into his presidency, all of the sanctions that Trump applied are still in place. So that is very important to understand.

AMY GOODMAN: [00:02:58] I wanted to go to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking Monday about Cuba.

SOS ANTONY BLINKEN: [00:03:05] Over the weekend, tens of thousands of Cubans took to the streets on the island to exercise their rights to assemble peacefully, and express their views. The protesters called for freedom and human rights. They criticized Cuba's authoritarian regime for failing to meet people's most basic needs, including food and medicine. In many instances, peaceful protesters were met with repression and violence. The Biden-Harris administration stands by the Cuban people and people around the world who demand their human rights and who expect governments to listen to and serve them rather than try to silence them.

Peaceful protesters are not criminals, and we join partners across the hemisphere and around the world in urging the Cuban regime to respect the rights of the Cuban people to determine their own future, something they have been denied for far too long.

AMY GOODMAN: [00:04:00] That is secretary of state Tony Blinken. Daniel Montero, if you can respond.

DANIEL MONTERO: [00:04:05] Yes. First of all, with, what secretary of state just said, I think he's being very polite, but I think it is always, in a way, uncomfortable for us as Cubans to listen to any American politician wishing us the best while at the same time, applying a policy that's exactly the opposite. Sure, who can oppose to the idea of a government listening to its people and the idea of everything working out for the better. Sure, that is ideal, but at the same time, it's a bit hypocritical to not mention the biggest problem to our economy.

We're talking about a moment in which we're living in crisis. People are taking to the streets because we are in a crisis and that crisis is largely due to the United States sanctions. To come out and just support people, no, the biggest support the Biden administration could offer to the Cuban people is to lift the sanctions, especially during the period of the pandemic.

JUAN GONZALEZ: [00:05:09] And could you comment about the reaction of Cuban Americans in the United States, especially in South Florida. At times there seemed to be bigger protests in Florida than there were in Cuba, in terms of actual people in the streets.

DANIEL MONTERO: [00:05:29] Yes. Look, the Cuban Americans in Florida, in many cases, can be blinded by some of the coverage that they have. I would say this, look, I can accept any comment and I think that the idea of all of the Cubans here and the Cubans abroad coming together and discussing the issues of the country, I think that is, an amazing idea and something we should all go for, but what has shocked me the most is to have Cuban Americans in Florida asking for a military intervention. This is this is some of the most colonial behavior I have ever seen in my life. Listen, because if you have any understanding of what a military intervention is, how can you call for another country's army to invade your country? That for me is simply outrageous. I don't know how else to describe it. Sorry if I, it's not most professional, but it is my country.

Cuba Isn't Suffering Under Communism, It's The USA's Economic Stranglehold - The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder - Air Date 7-15-21

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:06:36] Let's talk about Cuba a little bit here, because protests have broken out in Cuba recently over food, medicinal shortages, and people have the right to critique their government. They have legitimate critiques. They can have legitimate critiques over the inefficiencies of the Cuban government's ability to provide, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic that crippled Cuba's economy, because it relies a lot on tourism. And that, not every critique of a government that is on the left is something that we're going to say is illegitimate, right? That's not what we're talking about here.

In the United States, the conversation about the US's crippling sanctions that were reinstated by the Trump administration being a driving factor here is largely absent. It's not at least talked about enough at all. And these sanctions have become more and more obviously immoral and cruel. And that includes sanctions on Iran and other countries amidst this global pandemic, because sanctions hurt the citizenry. They are offset onto the people in that country and they're starved and they're lacking in medical supplies in many instances. Luckily the Cuban government has a significant history of providing for its citizens, so it's not as bad as say in Iran. But the Biden administration has not reversed Trump's reversal of Obama's policy of ending much of those crippling sanctions. Jen Psaki was asked about this yesterday. Let's take a listen to what she had to say.

JEN PSAKI: [00:08:18] And you and others stagnating Cuba.

REPORTER: [00:08:21] Secondly, on Cuba, what is the status of the review of the Trump-era policies?

JEN PSAKI: [00:08:25] Sure. So I would say Steve, that, and you and others who've covered this certainly know that one, first I will confirm, of course, we're still reviewing our Cuba policy with an eye toward its impact on the political and economic wellbeing of the Cuban people. The nature of the kinds of changes that were made by the previous administration, like re-designating Cuba as a state sponsor of terror, carries significant statutory restrictions. We've been running a thorough policy process on these and other issues with support for democracy and human rights always at the core of our work.

Now there's no question that the protests over the weekend, and the events of the last several days are a significant event, significant events, and it was the largest protest we've seen in Cuba in a long time that will obviously have an impact on how we proceed.

So we will see how things develop in the days ahead and develop our policy responses accordingly. We don't want to do it as one-offs. We want to look at it as we have been with a comprehensive approach in mind.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:09:22] Okay. So she says there that there are statutory restrictions because the Trump administration, yes, designated Cuba as a state sponsor of terror, was asinine.

So, here's the solution: circumvent those restrictions immediately, immediately. And then she also says that support for democracy and human rights is always at the core of the United States's work. Laugh along with me. You know, what's a violation of human rights? Prioritizing care about statutory restrictions over immediately ending a blockade of goods and sanctions that also influence other countries, by the way, that we are allied with, some of them go around it, but a lot of them cover to the United States, given the power that we have in the world. Understandably in some, I mean, not fully understandably, but you get what I'm saying. And the democracy part. The design of sanctions is literally to starve the Cuban people into making a determination for their own country that is based on artificial pain committed by the United States. So this is super indicative of the Biden administration's approach to foreign policy here. Whatever the foreign policy blob says goes, and we're not going to touch anything that forces us to take any position at all, except that the status quo is awesome. Even though his democratic predecessor, Obama, found it important enough to ease and reopen the relationship with Cuba. We don't want to take any position at all. So we're going to take a position, which is a position.

MATT LECH - PRODUCER, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:10:53] When these people say a democracy, they mean capitalism. We're not supporting Saudi Arabia because of democracy. It's because of capitalism.

And there's one thing to say, which is that, like you said upfront, end the embargo. And I don't know, Brendan, if you have that image, I just posted in Slack. But when you look at how stark this is and how alone America is, I don't know if you can full screen the image, maybe. But there's the US and Israel that voted in favor of maintaining the the embargo and then Colombia, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates that abstained.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:11:25] Brazil, I think also abstained.

MATT LECH - PRODUCER, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:11:27] That well, I'm not sure what's going on with those dark ones, the abstentions.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:11:29] I remember hearing they abstained.

MATT LECH - PRODUCER, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:11:31] Maybe there's a different kind of abstention than the yellow Colombia, Ukraine, UAE one. But I think the point is fairly clear, right?

You look at this. We're the bad guys. They're not suffering under communism. They're suffering under US economic stranglehold.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:11:45] And if the Iranian people, if the Cuban people want to protest their own government where we're not creating situations that they have to protest and making it much, much harder, than go ahead, that's their right to actual democracy, as opposed to capitalism, but said as democracy in this doublespeak way.

MATT LECH - PRODUCER, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:12:08] We're criminalizing protests here. We have all these sorts of anti-road protestor bills where you can

either run them down or arrest them for a long period of time. Which obviously weren't in play with the anti-Cuba protesters in Miami recently. Those guys are fine because that's not who those laws are against. Those are laws are meant to crack down on the left only.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:12:25] Of course. And by the way, we were talking about this a little bit before the show. The Biden administration stacked its team with foreign policy consultants from this WestExec consulting practice, which was headed by Tony Blinken, the secretary of state. What are they consulting on? Because from everything we've seen, they're doing nothing on foreign policy. They just want to go, "Nah-nah, I don't hear anything. I don't want to deal with this. I want to maybe deal with infrastructure and I don't want to cause any scene in this area." And we've even seen it in the way that they approach the border at the initial start of the administration.

MATT LECH - PRODUCER, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:13:04] The truth is these things are better left not talked about. Like the US has some dirty business that it likes to take care of and elaborating it publicly is not helpful for that.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM S: [00:13:13] Exactly. And Biden as the empire politician, as Jeremy Scahill puts it so well, not talking about it serves that very project. So, I think this is by design.

The Protests in Cuba Part 1 - Past Present - Air Date 7-20-21

NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:13:25] Anti-government protests erupted in Cuba this week in response to the country's deteriorating economic conditions and repressive government. These are historic protests in a country that does not tolerate dissent.

On Wednesday, the government announced it was temporarily lifting customs restrictions on food and medicine, a move that will ease some of the most severe shortages in the country.

The protests come at a pivotal moment in Cuban history. The country had been ruled by Fidel and Raul Castro since 1959, until Raul stepped down as head of the Communist Party this April. Yet, the transition from the Castros has not seen an easing of government repression, and it comes as the weight of embargoes, the pandemic, and strict economic policies, have brought Cuba to the breaking point.

Neil, why is what is happening in Cuba right now, so important?

NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:14:11] It's so important because these are the largest protests that Cuba has seen since the Cuban Revolution in 1959. And that is striking, that thousands of Cubans are coming out and protesting right now, and haven't done so for, what, six decades? Or more.

And so, a lot of people are saying that this is a moment in which things may actually change. It's a, possibly, turning point moment, as the New York Times... "The spark has been lit."

And, I think, if you look back over the 60 years of the Castro brothers rule in Cuba, and the Communist era, the smallest examples, the smallest instances of dissent were squashed

almost immediately, right? There's a long history here of intense political repression, political violence, human rights violation, that were handed out at, again, the smallest sort of examples of descent.

And so, to see thousands and thousands of Cubans taking to the street, in a very different political landscape, post-Castro, given all the other things that are happening in the world right now, that are also being felt in Cuba, it feels like a moment where something big might happen, where some sort of big change might come out.

NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:15:16] I think it's the post-Castro thing, in addition to everything else, that makes it feel so a potential, in a way.

Because a lot of what we're seeing, it reminds me, actually, of the Arab spring. You have the combination of protests and a really repressive place enabled, in some ways, or helped out, by social media, which is not brand new to Cuba, but they're just getting the expansion of 3G on the island, so they're able to make more use of social media and the internet.

And, yet it happens in a somewhat different context. You already have the Castros out of power. But you also have... it's been more than 10 years since the start of the Arab Spring, and that kind of "techno utopianism" that surrounded social media, and the revolutions that were happening there, that has, I think it's fair to say, has gone away.

So people aren't exactly, yeah, celebrating "Ah! Twitter is going to free the people of Cuba!" In the way that I think, naively, some people thought was happening back in the early 2010s..

NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:16:18] I think that's such a good point, and I have not seen anybody make that, except for you, Nikki. And it was... like, I'd like to take credit for also having that thought as well. That, remember how, like, breathless those declarations of... " This connectivity of social media is enabling a new revolutionary moment!" Naive would be too strong a word, but it was just so... breathless.

And I think since then we've had such a... many things that have made so many correctives to the notion that technology and social media is primarily a form that abets democratic sensibilities.

It can, but that's not def-- certainly not the only thing. And it's also not mutual connector, right? Of people; that there are lots of ways that's mitigated, with, like, distinct political purposes. Something we talked about with Facebook a lot in the, before, I believe, the 2020 election and talking about, sort of, amplification and algorithms and all the rest.

So, I think it's super interesting that the point is made, that, yeah, greater internet access is enabling this kind of communication, which is probably, certainly, one of the reasons for a more intense activism, but that it's not the "Twitter will save us a moment!" as you say.

NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:17:26] But I think we're also not in a moment of democratic triumphalism. It was one thing in the 2009, '10, '11 period, where you had the examples of Iraq and Afghanistan and, like, that you cannot export democracy. I think that was fairly settled by then. But you didn't yet have the examples of the rise of illiberal movements in the far right, in the U S, and in Europe, and other places.

And so, I think, now with these revolutions happening, there is a kind of tempered-ness, in the sense of, can a repressive regime continue? Yeah. It can. Even in the face of massive protest. And so I think that hovers over this as well.

What is McCarthyism And how did it happen - TED-ED - Air Date 3-14-17

ELLEN SCHRECKER: [00:18:02] Imagine that one day you're summoned before a government panel, even though you haven't committed any crime or been formally charged with one. You are repeatedly questioned about your political views, accused of disloyalty and asked to incriminate your friends and associates. If you don't cooperate, you risk jail or losing your job.

This is exactly what happened in the United States in the 1950s, as part of a campaign to expose suspected communists. Named after its most notorious practitioner, the phenomenon known as McCarthyism destroyed thousands of lives and careers. For over a decade, American political leaders trampled democratic freedoms in the name of protecting them.

During the 1930s and 1940s, there had been an active, but small communist party in the United States. Its record was mixed; while it played crucial roles in wider, progressive struggles for labor and civil rights, it also supported the Soviet Union. From the start, the American Communist Party faced attacks from conservatives and business leaders, as well as from liberals who criticized its ties to the oppressive Soviet regime.

During World War II, when the USA and USSR were allied against Hitler, some American communists actually spied for the Russians. When the Cold War escalated and this espionage became known, domestic communism came to be seen as a threat to national security. But the attempt to eliminate that threat soon turned into the longest-lasting and most widespread episode of political repression in American history.

Spurred on by a network of bureaucrats, politicians, journalists and businessmen, the campaign wildly exaggerated the danger of communist subversion. The people behind it harassed anyone suspected of holding left-of-center political views, or associating with those who did. If you hung modern art on your walls, had a multi-racial social circle, or signed petitions against nuclear weapons, you might just have been a communist. Starting in the late 1940s, FBI director J Edgar Hoover used the resources of his agency to hunt down such supposed communists and eliminate them from any position of influence within an American society. And the narrow criteria that Hoover and his allies used to screen federal employees spread to the rest of the country.

Soon Hollywood studios, universities, car manufacturers, and thousands of other public and private employers were imposing the same political tests on the men and women who worked for them. Meanwhile, Congress conducted its own witch-hunt, subpoenaing hundreds of people to testify before investigative bodies like the House Un-American Activities Committee. If they refuse to cooperate, they could be jailed for contempt, or more commonly, fired and blacklisted.

Ambitious politicians like Richard Nixon and Joseph McCarthy used such hearings as a partisan weapon, accusing Democrats of being soft on communism and deliberately losing China to the communist block. McCarthy, a Republican Senator from Wisconsin, became notorious by flaunting ever-changing lists of alleged communists within the state department. Egged on by other politicians, he continued to make outrageous accusations while distorting or fabricating evidence.

Many citizens reviled McCarthy, while others praised him. And when the Korean War broke out, McCarthy seemed vindicated. Once he became chair of the Senate's permanent subcommittee on investigations in 1953, McCarthy's recklessness increased.

It was his investigation of the army that finally turned public opinion against him and diminished his power. McCarthy's colleagues in the Senate censured him, and he died less than three years later, probably from alcoholism. McCarthyism ended as well. It had ruined hundreds, if not thousands of lives and drastically narrowed the American political spectrum. Its damage to democratic institutions would be long-lasting. In all likelihood, there were both Democrats and Republicans who knew that the anticommunist purges were deeply unjust, but feared that directly opposing them would hurt their careers. Even the Supreme Court failed to stop the witch hunt, condoning serious violations of constitutional rights in the name of national security. Was domestic communism an actual threat to the American government? Perhaps, though a small one. But the reaction to it was so extreme that it caused far more damage than the threat itself.

And if new demagogues appeared in uncertain times to attack unpopular minorities in the name of patriotism, could it all happen again?

A New Red Scare Is Coming - Second Thought - Air Date 7-9-21

ARCHIVAL AUDIO: [00:23:17] The first important thing you can do is to be sure what communism really is. In other words, know your enemy. Whoever you are, wherever you are, discuss the red menace with your neighbors, your friends, and your business associates, your fellow students. Are you a factory worker, a member of a union, a trade association, a service club bar, a church? Be alert to spot, anyone promoting the communist line and be doubly alert when the communists start hunting you. That's right, no matter who you are, you have your own circle of influence. So the commies want you. They have a variety of approaches. Any one of them may sound reasonable, even commendable just don't ever agree to join any committee or support any cause or sign any petition or allow your name to be used in any manner until you'll know the whole story, who's behind it, what the real objectives are.

JOSEPH MCCARTHY: [00:24:17] I feel that the millions of Americans who have long voted the Democrat ticket are just as loyal, they love America just as much, they hate communism just as much as the average Republican, which proves my contention that is that in this fight against communism, it isn't a Democrat fight, it isn't a Republican fight. It's so easy, you see, to talk about communism generally, to talk about the sellout in China and Korea generally, but unless you call the role of the traitor. Treason isn't like a little topsy, it doesn't just grow. It's created by men with faces and men with names.

I think those of us who have been elected by the American people to man the watchtower, unless we have the intelligence to recognize the traitors and then if I may use a word which we use in Wisconsin, unless we have the guts to name them, we should be taken down from those watchtowers and should not be representing the American people. And I don't intend to ever avoid giving the names of traitors, giving the names of communists, when I discover them in important positions.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:25:18] If you thought McCarthyism was a thing of the past, no such luck. This past month, Florida, governor Ron DeSantis held a bill signing event where he and some others explained what exactly their program entails. I'm going to play a few clips to give you a sense of what we're dealing with, and then we'll talk about some specific.

RON DESANTIS: [00:25:35] The bill also expands our previous efforts in civics to add a requirement for the high school government class that students receive instruction on the evils of communism and totalitarian ideologies. We have a number of people in Florida, particularly Southern Florida, who've escaped totalitarian regimes, who've escaped communist dictatorships to be able to come to America. Uh, We want all students to understand the difference. Why would somebody flee across shark infested waters, say, leaving from Cuba to come to Southern Florida? Uh, Why would somebody leave a place like Vietnam? Why would people leave these countries and risk their life to be able to come here? It's important that students understand.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:26:20] Okay, lots to unpack here. House Bill 5, which is one of three related bills, includes a requirement that high school students be taught about " the evils of communism and totalitarian ideologies." DeSantis then mentions Cuba and Vietnam.

Let's start with Cuba. Cuba is an island nation which has suffered under brutal US sanctions for nearly 60 years now. These sanctions have been denounced by the UN as illegal and inhumane and every single member state, with the exception of the US and Israel, continues to vote against the oppressive measures. Measures which have cost the Cuban economy trillions of dollars.

RON DESANTIS: [00:26:55] Now, as part of this bill, Florida will create a Portraits in Patriotism library so students can learn about real patriots who came to this school after seeing the horrors of these communist regimes. We actually have folks here today. You'll hear from her in a minute, Anna Bauza. She came to the United States when she was a teenager fleeing from Nicaragua, when the Sandinistas brought socialism to that country.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:27:22] Another part of the bill is the creation of what Florida is calling the Portraits in Patriotism library, where students can learn about people who are willing to be useful pawns to the political right, and condemn left-wing politics, including one person who fled from Nicaragua when " the Sandinistas brought socialism to that country." if Ron DeSantis weren't perhaps the dumbest politician currently living, I would assume this was satire. The years he's referring to are widely known as the period during which the United States funded right wing death squads in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

And it wasn't just indirect funding. The CIA also played an active and criminal role in what were called the dirty wars. For example, they planted mines around three Nicaraguan harbors, which constituted an act of state terrorism.

REPORTER: [00:28:07] While the mining of Nicaraguan harbors has caused a huge political furor in the United States, anti-Sandinista guerilla sources here in Costa Rica feel vindicated because of the tactical effectiveness of the mining. Specifically the denial of these high speed patrol boats and landing craft to the communist government in Nicaragua.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:28:28] Thank you. the US was convicted of violating international law at the World Court. So, when DeSantis talks about people fleeing Nicaragua when socialism came to the country, what he's leaving out is that socialism was on track to improve people's lives and counter the lie of capitalist superiority.

So the United States decided to intervene and plunged the country into chaos through unspeakable violence and violations of international law. None of this is secret knowledge. You can go online right now and read about Reagan's meddling in the global south.

RON DESANTIS: [00:28:59] Finally I'm signing House Bill 233. The bill requires colleges and universities to conduct annual assessments on the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at these institutions. It used to be thought that a university campus was a place where you'd be exposed to a lot of different ideas. Unfortunately, now the norm is really these are more intellectually repressive environments. You have orthodoxies that are promoted and other viewpoints are shunned or even suppressed, we don't want that in Florida. You need to have a true contest of ideas. Students should not be shielded ideas, and we want robust first amendment speech on our college and university campuses. And I think that having intellectual diversity is something that's very, very important.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:29:49] Okay. House Bill 233 "requires public colleges and universities to conduct annual assessments on the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at these institutions." Ron DeSantis is all about intellectual freedom, college kids having the chance to learn dissenting opinions, and freedom of speech on campus. Except, you know, when he's actively trying to ban things like critical race theory, which isn't even taught in Florida, or an accurate history of the slave trade. Topics which don't comply with his vision of a staunchly right-wing education. Let's get one thing straight, reactionaries like DeSantis and their wealthy suburban supporters seem to believe that all colleges and universities are anticapitalist indoctrination centers.

JOSEPH MCCARTHY: [00:30:30] Are you a student or a teacher? Well, write to your Congressman for a copy of J. Edgar Hoover's report Communist Target: Youth. See how on direct orders from Moscow the party is in a drive to get communist speakers into our colleges and universities. Taking advantage of American academic freedom and the students naturally inquiring minds, their aim is to preach revolutionary tactics and change peaceful campuses into scenes like this: the communist incited student riots in San Francisco.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: [00:31:07] The assertion that communists are brainwashing, the country's college students isn't new. It's a page ripped directly from McCarthyism, and we need to understand it as such. It is part of the new red scare.

What this legislation hopes to achieve, besides fully rewriting actual history, is to have guest lecturers from blatantly anticommunist front groups come to schools and inject McCarthy era cold war rhetoric into the minds of American students, starting them on the track to become obedient, terrified, little worker drones when they complete their state mandated propaganda education.

I can say I agree with DeSantis on one thing, teaching American history is critical. That's why I am so opposed to this new initiative, it doesn't teach history. It dredges up the worst aspect of the red scare and tries to indoctrinate children with bizarre, outdated, and flat-out false pro America anti-communist propaganda.

The Protests in Cuba Part 2 - Past Present - Air Date 7-20-21

NICOLE HEMMER - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:32:00] I think, when we talk about international issues, we often both acknowledge the limits of our expertise as U S historians, and also while honoring what we do in this podcast, which is: what does this mean for the United States, and what is the U S's role been in here?

And I'm curious to know what you all think about the fact that this particular oppressive regime is a left-wing regime; and how does the fact that, this isn't Castro, but this is a Communist country that is enacting this... how do you think that affects how the reporting and how this whole case of Cuban uprising is playing in the U S?

The reason that I think of this is because one of the, kind of, points of tension around a U S response is that Black Lives Matter issued a statement that a lot of people were really angry about. And the nature of that anger was that people thought they were in many ways parroting that Cuban regime in saying that this was all the fault of U S imperialism.

The Cuban regime for a long time has said that uprising is purely a CIA plant that's meant to undermine the government in power. And so people in the U S, who often would consider themselves allies with Black Lives Matter are like, what? Like, this is... Not... primar-- like, you need to hold the Cuban regime accountable for its role in this, not parrot their line about, "Oh, this is just the result of U S imperialism."

So I don't know if you followed that storyline too, and what you think.

NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:33:21] I've seen some writing about that, although I don't think that it has had a major effect on the reporting about what's happening in Cuba. There are a couple of different lenses through which to look at this, and I'm not sure of left is the... the best way to think about it. And I wonder if thinking about colonialism and anti-colonialism is maybe the better way.

And again, my mind is just being dragged back to the example of the Arab Spring, when you had a combination of anti U S government, but also governments that had been propped up, and countries whose stories had been... histories had been profoundly effected by U S intervention, and by U S meddling in who gets to run the country. And I think a lot of that is happening around Cuba as well.

There are... these protests are not being stirred up by the CIA, I think it's fair to say. So, I think we can navigate, sort of, false propaganda coming from the Cuban government while still reckoning with the legacy of, for instance, the U S embargo in Cuba, which, these are separate issues in some ways, like, Cuba has its own set of economic problems that happened because there haven't been any genuine economic reforms there. It's repressive government is the core part of its problem, not the United States, but the U S embargo is harming the Cuban people, especially in a time of profound crisis in the midst of this pandemic.

And U S involvement in the island has been a problem for Cuba for at least a century. And I think that that goes to Fidel Castro and to the Communist regime as well, because Cuba became... it obviously had its own autonomy, but it became a bargaining chip; it became one of those places where Cold War tensions and Cold War goals are being played out, not always with the needs and desires of the Cuban people in mind.

NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:35:08] I do think it was striking how much the role, or the causative factor, of the U S embargo here was downplayed in the reporting. It seemed like in nearly every article we read, every time the Cuban government invoked the U S embargo as the, sort of, explanatory power behind these protests, the pieces spent a long time explaining why that wasn't the case, even as it acknowledged that as you just have, nikki, that there is a long role that the embargo has played in making things worse here, that this isn't what is of the moment right now.

And so I think, they... these are journalists and news analysts writing, and not historians. But, I also wonder if the fact that Biden hasn't changed Trump's policy when it comes to the U S embargo in Cuba, if that's playing into it as well. And I think in some ways, like, if we can just pull out and take a historical view here, I think it's also safe to say that the, sort of, bipartisan position on Cuba, certainly there's been variations from one administration to another, and certainly there are variations, if not in policy, I think in tone, when it comes to us Cuban relations.

But, if we're at the, sort of, bird's eye view of this, historically, there's a fairly consistent bipartisan position here when it comes to Cuba. And I also... and I think that's both instructive for us thinking about how the reporting is going down, and also is a shaper of how that reporting is playing out right now.

NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:36:34] But with a major exception, right? Which is the Obama administration, which had tried as hard as it could, with the restrictions that Congress has in place to open up U S relations with Cuba.

And that's... that makes the Biden policy, in some ways, more interesting, because Biden has presented himself as someone who was carrying on the legacy of the Obama administration, and yet on Cuba has been reticent.

And it's hard to know how much of that is because of his own thoughts on foreign policy, something that Biden was deeply embedded in the Senate, and how much of that is shaped by electoral concerns. Because one of the places that really didn't like the Obama administration's moves around Cuba were Cuban-Americans in Florida.

There was a... it's not a monolithic community, but there was certainly some real pushback to the Obama administration's decisions to work with the Cuban government to create a thaw back in 2015, 2016.

NEIL YOUNG - CO-HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:37:28] Yeah, I think that's an important part here. Obviously, any person running for president needs to do well in Florida, and the Cuban-American vote there is a significant factor in people do. It is important to remember that Obama had basically pulled even. Um, I think he got close to 50% of the vote in both 2008 and 2012. His policies, though, come at the end of his presidency, and they show up, I think, and in terms of their electoral effects, more in 2016, in how Hillary Clinton did not-as-well, as a, sort of, I think, response, again, to what Obama had been doing there.

Although, one of the really important factors here is also the generational divide when it comes to Cuban-American and voters in Florida. And we see generational divides and one constituency after another. There was a... quite a significant break between older Cubans, who, many of them, come from Cuba to the U S, and Cuban Americans who had been born here, and who had a, sort of, different politics.

And, we're seeing that a lot in 2008, 2012. And it seemed to be suggesting that was going to be a trend that developed even more over time. But I think 2020 showed us that there is still a lot of power here, in terms of a Cuban-American vote consolidating around a Republican candidate who takes a, sort of, hard-line position about Cuba.

The other significant factor, though, in 2020, which was much newer in Florida, in South Florida was the large, increased presence of Venezuelans, who were also responding to that hard-line position about Cuba, and also to the ways in which the right attached socialism to Biden. I just know from a friend in South Florida, that Spanish language radio was running constant ads in 2020 from the Trump administration talking about "El socialismo del Biden." So that, that was something that was not just directed to Cubans, but to an expanding Central and South American constituency in South Florida, that would be alarmed by associations with socialism.

Investigating Democracy - Now & Then - Air Date 6-8-21

HEATHER COX-RICHARDSON - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:39:29] Then we pick the Army-McCarthy hearings because that's a really interesting moment where Americans have to decide if it's okay to control politics by lying.

it comes down to the actions of the junior Senator from Wisconsin, a guy named Joe McCarthy, who in 1950, made huge news. When he said that he had a list of 205 communists who were working in the state department. And this was really his way to get a leg up in his election. because he wasn't a very well-known Senator at the time.

he becomes a man who leads the charge against what he says is communism in the American government and in things like Hollywood and across the country, and really sparks this wave of anti-communism going across the country in the early 1950s. But the trick to McCarthy is he's making it. up. he's acting by innuendo.

He's pulling people in front of the cameras. He's accusing people. at the end of the day, he never produces any evidence, but he keeps the press always on the run by having one

accusation after another one headline and grabbing attack after another. he starts out in going after the state department in the 1950s.

And he brings in more and more groups in America. But finally in 1953, he overreaches by going for the army. Because an aide of his a 25-year-old lawyer aide of his named Roy Cohn, that's going to be important in a minute, gets upset because a friend of his G. David Schine, is drafted into the army as a private, and he wants them to have a commission.

In order to get shine, a commission McCarthy begins to accuse the army itself of harboring communists. of course, Dwight, Eisenhower's the president and he is fond of the US army. So this is not something that's going to endear him to the president, but also to members of the Republican party.

They're both Republicans. In the spring of 1954, Congress begins to hold hearings to iron out whether or not the army has unfairly treated David Schine and harbors communists the way that McCarthy charges or whether McCarthy and Cohn had been putting undue pressure on the army to go ahead and get Schine a better deal.

these become known as the Army–McCarthy hearings. And they're enormously important. Because what happens is people have been reading in the newspapers, the headline grabbing accusations by McCarthy, that there are communists, who are perverting American society. And the country is sliding into this, totalitarian nightmare and that there's this corruption throughout the government and these headline accusations he would make would later be proven to be nothing, but nobody ever read the corrections on page four.

So this was the moment where. McCarthy is on television in front of the world acting as he does.

JOANNE FREEMAN - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:42:14] that's, one of the interesting things about this is that we're suddenly we're in a new moment. We're in a more modern moment and a really interesting. Technological moment, which is that in this case, in addition to newspaper headlines, people can watch these hearings.

They can watch what's happening on TV. They can sit in their homes in their living rooms and watch what's going on. in a sense, they can see firsthand McCarthy's style of operating, which if it's abrasive is being nice about it. One New York times critic said one cannot remain indifferent to Joe McCarthy in one's living room.

He's an abrasive man. He's recklessly transparent. another said that because people could see how extreme and over the top he was that seeing him on TV, meant coverage, did him in. People started to laugh at him. He became a joke and then a bore, he got tiresome. So what might've worked in headlines when people were at home watching it, so that ultimate tribunal, again, the public could see it for themselves and draw their own conclusions.

HEATHER COX-RICHARDSON - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:43:23] as many as 80

million people were watching at least some of these hearings and they heard the testimony where for example, he would say, I have here a photograph, and then it would turn out that the photograph was doctored.

JOANNE FREEMAN - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:43:36] But let me ask you Heather, when he did that, how did people find out that it was doctored? He would hold it up and he would say I have here a photo. Did they have to be reading the newspaper to find that out? Or, how would have that actual knowledge of

fake news”-

HEATHER COX-RICHARDSON - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:43:51] That it was fake? Yeah. The Opposing counsel, who is a Boston lawyer named Joseph Nye Welch, Was very good about refuting that he had a very good team and he would say, I see that.

And I'm obviously paraphrasing. I see that you have produced this photograph, but here is the original photograph and it would be something very different. the point there was that he exposed McCarthy as a liar, as somebody who was simply being, as you say, a bore or trying to dominate a situation by lying at the time.

People were absolutely horrified because things that might have looked reasonable in the newspaper when you read it. And often I find this, when I read the news, I'll read the account of something by one or another right-wing senators or congressmen, and I'll think that sounds really reasonable.

then I'll sit there and actually chase down the facts. And it's no, he made all that up.” It sounded reasonable. because he made it up and that's exactly what McCarthy was doing. then very famously, All of this comes to a really important head on June 9th when McCarthy recognizing that he's losing ground, he's been making dirtier and dirtier accusations to try and, be dominant even as he is losing ground as a person like that does as a bully, does they get worse and worse?

The more they recognize that they're losing ground. he goes after one of the young men who's on Welch's team Welch knew that it was coming. In a sense, he set up McCarthy and McCarthy goes after this young man. Welch says to him, you have to imagine this man sitting there with the microphone in front of him at this low table, and soon he's going to be putting his head in his hands.

And he says, Senator. May we not drop this. then he goes on to say, we knew this. You're just trying to hurt this man. then he goes on to say, Let us not assassinate this lad further, senator. You've done enough. Have you no sense of decency sir, at long last? Have you left? No sense of decency? Have you left? No sense of decency.

JOANNE FREEMAN - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:46:02] by the end of that hearing, not that long after this exchange, the room where this was taking place, burst into applause. Even in that one room, the impact of this was really clear.

HEATHER COX-RICHARDSON - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:46:14] So the Senate goes on to condemn McCarthy. They have censure hearings for him, but they actually condemn him rather than censuring him.

While some of his supporters tend to think of that. As a victory, he was really done. People had turned against McCarthy. He died three years later from complications relating to alcoholism and he falls out of the picture. But in that moment, Americans decided that they

did not think it was okay to get political advantage by lying. But what's interesting about that minute, you know, where I'm going with this.

JOANNE FREEMAN - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:46:43] Yes.

HEATHER COX-RICHARDSON - CO-HOST, NOW & THEN: [00:46:43] What's interesting about that minute is of course Roy Cohn, that man that was the 25-year-old aide to Joe McCarthy is the man that Donald Trump considered a mentor. While there was in fact a political revulsion at the way, McCarthy behaved, it was a strand of Political rhetoric that did in fact go into a certain wing of the Republican party and has come to fruition in the present.

We Just Want the Basics - Rare Protests in Cuba Amid Deep Economic Crisis, Ongoing U.S. Blockade Part 2 - Democracy Now! - Air Date 7-14-21

AMY GOODMAN: [00:47:08] For more, we go to Havana, Cuba to speak with Daniel Montero, Cuban journalist with the independent news group Belly of the Beast. He narrated the report you just heard. Daniel, welcome to Democracy Now!. Can you start off by continuing to describe what's happening in the streets? In the United States, the corporate media here says that just anger at the Cuban regime has blown up and that thousands are marching everywhere, and then you have in Miami people marching as well. Can you give us your perspective on what's happening and were you yourself detained?

DANIEL MONTERO: [00:47:47] Thank you so much for having me. First of all, what happened this July 11th was historical, there's no denying that. Not since 1994, thousands of people had taken to the streets and back then it had to do with another major economic crisis we had, that one caused by the fall of the Soviet Union. The thing is that right now a big number of things have combined. We are not only going through the hardest moment of the pandemic in Cuba, we had been doing very well in the pandemic so far, but in the last months things have not been well, we have thousands of cases. At the same time, there's big lines people need to do just to acquire the basics -- there's no medicine. All of these things have come together.

And at the same time, I would say that, everything people are seeing on media, especially media based out of Florida, that people now everyone has access to internet in Cuba, I would say that the picture they're painting to their audience is that one of a country falling to pieces and that we need help from wherever we can get it. So I think that when all of these things came together, then this happened. Several cities across the country, people went to the streets and of course the biggest ones happened here in Havana.

I was in downtown Havana. I saw thousands of people there, they were calling for the end of communism, they were calling for a change, but the combination is interesting because when you hear the things they're saying when they sing together, it's all about the politics of it, but when you talk to them, we were doing interviews in the streets, when you talk to them, they were just like, "We just want more food. We just want medicine. We just want the basics." And I think that it's quite an interesting combination.

There were violent encounters in the streets. In the area I was in, there was a lot of violence, I would say, and a lot of people got injured, both from the protesters and from the police. There were arrests, I was arrested myself while we were filming. I was released later that night. That's what happened during that day. Now, what's worrying for us is that the picture that's been painted so far is that people are still in the streets by the thousands and that the country is a complete chaos. And that is not what I am seeing here. Yes. Sunday was worrying, but it's more calm since. I would say it's very tense, precisely because it is almost unprecedented. So we're all just worried basically, but things are a bit calmed down.

JUAN GONZALEZ: [00:50:41] Daniel Montero, could you talk a little bit about the generational divide in terms of the protests, in terms of who is participating and what happened after president, Miguel Díaz-Canel called on supporters of the Cuban government to come out into the streets, was there any? Because obviously in Cuba, those people who have covered Cuba in the past, know that at times the government can call millions of people out into the streets, when it wants to support a particular public manifestation.

DANIEL MONTERO: [00:51:19] Yes, Yes. After the, anti-government people took to the streets in the afternoon, president Miguel Díaz-Canel went on national television and called on his supporters to take the streets. And there was a lot of [inaudible] people that, also took to the streets. And in some cases you would have, in the same places, anti-government and pro-government people having it out, yelling at each other. And I, didn't witness it myself, but I do know that I have seen reports that some violence, in some cases unraveled, when this happened.

In terms of a generational divide, I think it's very much. real. I think the younger generations like mine, we're less worried about the ideology of our political system, and more about just having things work, and work for [inaudible]. And of course, an older generation, I would say my parents' generations or my grandparents' generation, it's different. They built what we're seeing now, what's called the Cuban revolution, so I think they have more of an ideological commitment to government. And that is what we saw on the streets. Most of the people that went out, anti-government people, were younger and then the pro-government people, you could say, belong to a bit older generation.

Summary 8-1-21

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:52:50] We've just heard clips today, starting with Democracy Now! discussing the impact of the embargo on Cuba; the Majority Report also highlighted the impact of the embargo, and the motivations of capitalism driving it; Past Present looked at the antigovernment protests, while comparing and contrasting to the Arab spring; Ted Ed explained McCarthyism and the threat of anticommunist fervor to freedom. Second Thought tied Florida's anti- Critical Race Theory and anti-communism education policies to the long history of red scare politics; Past Present looked at some of Cuba's faults, in addition to the impacts of the embargo, and the political influence of anti-Cuba passion in the critical swing state of Florida; and Democracy Now! discussed the details of how Cuba is being financially starved, helping to cause the humanitarian crisis underway.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips from Now And Then, giving an overview of McCarthyism and its direct ties to Trump, believe it or not, and the element of conservative politics that supports him; and Democracy Now! spoke more with a Cuban

journalist about his impressions of the protests, and the generational divide between the pro- and anti- government sentiment in Cuba.

To hear that, and all of our bonus content, delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support, or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information. Every request is granted, no questions asked. And now, we'll hear from you.

Abortion terminology - William in Charlottesville, Virginia

VOICEDMAILER: WILLIAM IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA: [00:54:25] Good morning! This is William in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Quick note on the terminology used in the abortion debate, as well as the overall polarization of it;

First, it's not a two sided argument. It's in our nature to try and draw a line in the sand on EVERY issue these days. Then, we oversimplify the hell out of the two sides.

Abortion is a multi-faceted web work of an issue. It's circumstantial. It's utilitarian. It's emotional. It has everything to do with medical care, education, birth control, individual rights, etc.

I often tell people I'm both "Pro Choice" and "Pro Life" when I'm dealing with someone who's hooked on those buzz terms, in that, I wish it didn't have to be something any woman would ever need to consider, but I also can't pretend like I know better than any woman the choice she should make when faced with it.

The other thing is the terminology.

"Pro Life" conjures up chivalrous imagery. It's a "noble" cause. The "right" side.

"Pro Choice" however makes people sound selfish and soulless. Their choice is more important than a baby's life. Who would ever want to be such a disgusting person??

I don't subscribe to this two sided over simplification of the issue.

In your podcast, a point is brought up about how someone might use the argument, "Oh, you're pro life, but also for the death penalty? How hypocritical!" The minutes that follow talk about this argument, but it never once realizes the obvious; we are not beholden to the terms put forward. We need not be pigeon-holed by them.

"Pro life" really does not mean anything any more than "Pro Choice". The terms, "Pro Life" and "Pro Choice" are NOT synonymous with the debate over abortion and should not be treated as such.

Please people, stop feeding the trolls. If someone asks your stance on abortion, tell them EVERYTHING. Don't just throw out a buzz term. Give the argument the time it deserves.

Final comments on the terms we use to explain our support of abortion rights

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:56:10] Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202-999-3991. Or write me a message to Jay@BestoftheLeft.com.

So just a quick response to William who we just heard commenting on the abortion debate: first of all, William was disappointed, I think, that I didn't have a voice available for him to more closely mirror his self-ascribed "backwoods hillbilly" vocal style. So apologies for that. Hopefully the technology will progress in the coming years and we can create a whole range of vocal styles; that would be my preference.

On the content of what William was saying in terms of oversimplification and buzz terms and what do they mean? Are they beneficial for anyone to use? Are they so vague that no one really knows what you're talking about anyway? I think there's a lot of valid points being made, his main point being basically, we are not beholden to those terms. We are allowed to describe ourselves in more specific terms, or just explain what we really mean, rather than leaning on those buzz terms. And I think that's perfectly legitimate. The argument being made on the show in that segment that he's referring to actually is about how we should not get caught up in terms and hypocrisies related to those terms and terms of getting down into the muck and the weeds.

And it is advocating to say what you're for. Now, I mean, it doesn't necessarily specify which terms to use. But shifting our framing from buzz terms, or opposing that which we are against and shifting to a positive, "this is what we're for" kind of mindset, I think it's beneficial on many levels. And it was a communications expert who was making that case, so I'm certainly not going to argue against that anyway.

Also in the show, there was an argument being put forward that I actually hadn't heard before. It's actually so clear and simple that it is a little embarrassing that it hadn't come up. But basically over the last several decades, the term "abortion" has been toxified, and so that's why we have these sort of vague squishy terms like "pro-choice" and "pro-life," because abortion in people's minds has been turned into a terrible thing that you should be ashamed of, which is another point being made on the show. The ideas of safe, legal, and rare, put a positive sheen over a negative sentiment. And so it's a way of being good and helpful, but still kind of perpetuating that sense of shame that should be put on this concept. And so the argument was made: abortion, pro-abortion, we're in favor of it. We think it's a medical practice that should be done. We think that it should be done when people need for it to be done, just like every other medical practice and medical event. There are treatment that someone encounters, if you need the treatment, you should get the treatment. An abortion is a medical procedure. And those who need it are the ones who should have it. It's not that complicated. And so where I would really push back on William is when he says we try to make things very clear and simple and create clear and simple dividing lines, but abortion doesn't fit that very well because it is so complicated and there's so many nuanced thoughts and all of that. I think his framing is just missing the point of where the dividing line is. And the dividing line is over who gets to decide. No one who calls themselves pro-choice

or pro-abortion or an advocate of reproductive justice would turn around and argue that the decision-making process for deciding to have or not have an abortion is simple, and my politics helps me define where that simple line is. Nobody says that. Part of the argument is that it is complicated, which is why it is so critical for that decision to only be in the hands of the person affected by the pregnancy.

That is the clear dividing line. And I mentioned reproductive justice. I just want to throw that out there for anyone not familiar. If abortion is the super simple, clear, gender-inclusive, non confusing term, then reproductive justice is sort of on the other end in terms of complication, but it is the holistic view that includes many, many additional issues that go far beyond abortion and recognizes that there is much more involved.

So advocating for it to be legal to have an abortion isn't nearly far enough, and that this conversation should be seen as one of an entire tapestry of issues, including all aspects of family planning. All the way to people who have chosen to have children and their ability to raise healthy kids in safe places that the elements of societal design and urban design and all of these things can actually be put under this very large and inclusive umbrella about creating a situation in which people can make their own decisions all along the way, have children, have abortions, whatever they want to have happen. And for those children to be raised as a matter of course, in good, healthy, safe places, just as one example. So that's sort of the whole range. And I think all of it is incredibly valid, from the argument from just use the clear, simple term "pro-abortion". It's not confusing. It says exactly what you're in favor of. But also on the other end of the spectrum, advocating for reproductive justice recognizes that abortion is just one piece of it. And we need to be thinking broader to create the healthy society that we're advocating for.

So, those are my thoughts on that. Not that many of them are original thoughts. I'm just trying to help boost some of the best ideas that some of the smartest people working on this topic have been saying for years or literally decades.

And now last thing today before I go, I'm going to take a vacation this coming week. And here's the metaphor to help you understand.

I was on the phone. We were having a little team meeting with Deon and Erin and I was a little befuddled. I was looking for a to-do list that I wanted to tell them about. And I was like, Aw, man, I don't know. I've got these, I don't know, four or five sticky notes in front of me, but I can't find the one that has the list that I want to tell you about. Oh, wait, the wind blew in from the window and scattered my other sticky notes onto the floor under my chair. And we thought, yeah, that that's probably the metaphor that more or less explains how things are going right now. Hence the need for a vacation. So that's coming up next week. There will, of course be re-posted episodes, which I think people like. People download those because I pick out the ones that I think are particularly good or interesting from our archives. And so be on the lookout for those. And members are still going to be getting a bonus episode because we've already recorded it. And so that's coming out next week as well. If you're not already a member, now's a perfect time to sign up, to get onboard for that.

As always, keep the comments coming in at 202-999-3991, or 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 monosyllabic, transcriptionist trio, Ben, Ken, and Scott 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.

And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at BestoftheLeft.com/support or from right inside the Apple Podcast app, if that's your style. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good bonus episodes, in addition to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on our website and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

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