

Dennis Prager Sketches the Future of Western Civilization

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORmW68YmLM4&t=0s&index=39&list=PLo1Jq23H_s5XVxAseMKYJA4aH3cOI07si

FOUNDATIONS

0:00 I have a very deep connection to ISI and National Review that I'd like to tell you about and it would be unknown to any of you in the case of National Review, ISI is newer. But the first article that I ever had published was published by William Buckley in National Review. I bet you didn't know that ... [aside] You did know it? [Distant voice from audience; Prager responds] No, there's no way you could.

I was 21 years old, and I contacted William Buckley, and it gives you ...

By the way, it's 100% to his credit that he published me. I was an unknown, completely unknown. But he so wanted to give young people a start. It was to his credit.

My article incidentally was awful. (Light laugh from the audience). No, no, no ... I'm not happy to say this, but I can prove it to you. Because this is what it was.

My field of study ... I was at the time in Columbia and I was at the Russian and Middle-Eastern Institute at the School of International Affairs. So my chief area of

1:00 study was communist countries, communism, Russian and so on. So I was taking another trip to Eastern Europe and that's how I contacted him. I mean, how many conservatives are going to Poland, you know, East Germany, and Romania, and so on.

So he said, "Sure, you know, write it. What is it on?" So I said, "Well, I was in Poland and I'd like to write: "Will [Edward] Gierek Survive." Now, none of you probably remember Gierek, there's no reason why you would. He was the Polish communist leader for about ten years, even more than ten years.

This was 1970. And I wrote the article "Will Gierek Survive." He did. Another ten years. (Audience light laugh) So, in effect I was right 'cause I predicted his downfall. (Audience laughter) So that's why I really do believe that it's the most embarrassing piece that I ever wrote. And god bless William Buckley ... whom I

2:00 then had the chance, I brought him out to California, I was in my 20's, the head of an educational institute there. And I have to tell you, I ... I ... I measure more than anything else—this is very autobiographical—I could spend the whole talk on this, but it's not what you invited me to speak on. I ... since I was a child ... I have felt, and I am certain of this ... brains are wildly overrated in their significance.

Wildly. And in fact, I don't even find brilliant people interesting unless they're

good. There are people who find brilliant bad people interesting; I don't.

Goodness interests me more than brains. And it was always the case ... obviously, everyone knows how brilliant Buckley was, but I picked up immediately what a

3:00 decent, truly decent, man he was. And that's what fascinated me. I spent a day with him, a day I will never forget. And the way he treated me, much younger than he, and you know no big deal. But it was something I'll never forget. He ... he was an extraordinary human being.

So I have very wonderful long ties and I've been now as well each week my column has been published among other places at National Review, and I love being published there because of the number of readers, the quality of the readers, and the beautiful work they put into every single piece. It's a real credit. The editing, thank god it's not too severe because I already go through Allen Estrin, who you've already met, and my wife, who do the severe editing in advance. But

charity: recognition of

credit: someone keeping count; justice

humility/self-deprecation: can laugh at one's own foibles

? Any significance to his choice, the School of International Affairs

blessed: awareness of blessings, need to bless, blessed--by God?

goodness over brains: educating without morals, i.e., character development/formation as a lost art; weakness of a secular education; immediate response to goodness; Heidegger

decent: charity toward others outside of one's family, clan, or tribe, without expecting gains

no big deal: innate, not rehearsed or calculated

extraordinary: moral standards

recognition of quality and beauty: associated with awe and mystery (transcendental); an immediate aesthetic response to goodness; grace; and many gathered around it
real credit: honest praise for quality and beauty

4:00 also the beautiful art and photo work. It's just ... it's a terrific page. And so it's great to be affiliated, great to see you Jonah [waves to someone in the audience], and to be speaking in front of you, all of you who are here from National Review. And as regards ISI, well I've come to know you better and better, promoting ISI on my show, which was great for you, which made me very happy that you do such great work.

And I'll give you a little example of something that you do that is so good and that I had a little role in. And that was a book that was just published, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise*. Now, that's not best seller-dom oriented [light laugh], because Andalusian is not an everyday term for most people, even National Review readers. But of course Andalusia was the part of Spain from about the 9th to the 14th century governed by Muslims. And there is this huge myth that Islam is a truly tolerant religion. And it isn't, and it never was. And that's not anti Muslim, may I add? Christianity in the Middle Ages was not a tolerant religion either. It ... but ... but ...

I hate lies. I hate ... I have a visceral hatred for lying. And the [glances off stage] Yeah, I do, I really do. [Audience laughs] And I can't stand the lies that are perpetrated today, perpetuated, and one of them being, really, it's [Islam] is tolerant and something happened. It was never tolerant. It's Dar al-Harab and Dar al-Islam, the house of war and the house of Islam, and that's just the way it is.

6:00 Anyway, ISI published this book by a professor of Portuguese and Spanish Studies at North Western. I got the book in the mail ... thank god ISI sent it to me, I would not have known about it as much as I try to know what is being published. And I knew this guy wrote a gutsy book. And I had him on for an hour, and I'm happy to tell you—I am as happy about ISI and the author as I am for my show. The book went ... we have, we took photos, Allen and I took photos of—Alan is also the producer of my show as well as the founder, and he says I'm co-founder but it's not true, he founded it, I said OK and that was it—anyway, we took photos of the amazon.com page of this book. Before he came on, the book was listed at 38,700, and after the show it was 787. So I felt great about the show.

7:00 But I felt great about my listeners that they would go buy such a book, and of course for ISI who published such a book, because it's so important.

So to be invited ... Well, I say something again autobiographical. I have found after 33 years of radio a very big lesson and one day I'd like to write *Lessons I have Learned* from doing radio for so long. The more people know about you the more they trust you. That's true in private life, and it's true in public life. The opaque are not trusted. So I took a very big gamble from the beginning and I just opened up to people. And it has paid off, because ... You know what people say to me the most when they meet me, like the TSA agent today in Phoenix?

8:00 For some reason TSA agents love my show; I have no idea why. What I say about government employees, I can't believe they listen! But my wife is a living witness. She is with me. TSA agents in every city. Oh! In fact ... wait, I don't want to lose my train ... but it was a great moment with the TSA agent and then I'll tell you about the autobiographical thing in a moment.

So, I ... this is a problem in being a public figure and you just must know this, especially if are respected for who you are and not just what you say. So the other day in Minnesota there was this ridiculously long line in the pre-check line.

his choice of what to praise; what he responds to

about to learn what he considers "good"

visceral hatred of lies: if one truly values honesty then one must *detest* lies; one becomes a lie detector

one great lie: a tolerant Islam—and there must be other great lies being *perpetuated*, i.e., actively supported—at the scale of national and international relations (college); *the way it is* (non-relative truth); he takes truth seriously **providence?**

recognizes and respects **moral courage**

joy over others sharing his interest in truth, and ISI for their moral courage in publishing it

openness: (vs. lying)—exposes your foundational stance to the world; no longer cover by "value-signaling" doctrines; charity (trust)

moral courage

public figure: makes the problem acute **known for one's foundational stance**, not verbal doctrines or brilliance; authenticity—known for openness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility

doctrine

doctrine