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Guest (s): John Perkins (senior at Millsaps College and editor of *Campus Conservative*)

Title: College Journalism and Awakening of Conservative Attitudes on College Campuses

Note: Questions were paraphrased and/or shortened by the transcriber. For the exact question, please consult the audiotapes.

Morphew: We're very happy to have as our guest today, John Perkins, a senior at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi. John is involved in perhaps the newest venture in college journalism, a somewhat unique enterprise, he's executive editor of a monthly newspaper called the *Campus Conservative*. John, very happy to have you with us today.

Perkins: Dick, it's quite a pleasure to be on your program. I welcome this opportunity to present our viewpoints on our newspaper throughout the nation.

Morphew: How did the CC get started? It's fairly recent isn't it?

Perkins: Yes, we got started about six months ago, Dick.

Morphew: And who started it?

Perkins: Well, a group of students from four or five Mississippi colleges. We saw a great need for action on conservative government in this country.

Morphew: It's becoming more national in scope and acceptance, I understand.

Perkins: Yes, we've had inquiries recently from Michigan State. They have a conservative club there, and just a few days ago we shipped 3000 papers of our recent issue off to Michigan State. Of course, it's too early yet to know what the reaction there will be.

Morphew: Why did you start this paper?

Perkins: Well, Dick, we were alarmed at the growing centralization of government in this country and at the lessening of individual responsibility. We felt that government,

although good as it is, the individual should have a maximum responsibility and the government if possible a minimum.

Morphew: By conservative you do not mean conservative only in regard to subjects of states rights, race relations and similar subjects?

Perkins: No, Dick. We try to cover the whole realm ranging from international all the way down to local levels.

Morphew: Do you believe the success of your paper is a sign of a more conservative attitude among college students today?

Perkins: Dick, I think it is, in light of recent events during the past year or so considerable numbers of conservative groups of all nature have sprung up on college campuses ranging all the way from Harvard over to Wisconsin and down in the South. For example, up at Harvard the student council president last year, who by the way has just been reelected, is a crusading young conservative and he is openly opposing the liberal doctrines of professors Arthur Schlesinger and John Galbraith. And the Keliopian Society (sp?) at Yale, that's a conservative club there, was once almost extinct but now this club is revived and they have to limit membership.

Morphew: Is there an awakening of conservative societies on southern campuses as well?

Perkins: Yes, I would believe so, although it's too early to tell yet from our venture, we find that our paper is well-received where we've distributed it so far.

Morphew: From what you've heard and observed, are the faculty on these campuses encouraging or discouraging this conservative organization?

Perkins: Well, I wouldn't say they were exactly discouraging it, Dick, but there's this factor to consider: most of the college professors today are liberal-minded for the simple reason that they belong to what we call 'the liberal generation.' That is the generation that sprang up about 1930 during the Depression, and it's a natural tendency of young people, particularly college people to rebel against conformity. Now the conformity we find today is a conformity of liberalism, that is, most of the professors are continually taking a liberal bent by their very nature, by their own personal philosophies and the college students, quite naturally want something different and so they are turning to the new language for this new day, the language of conservatism.

Morphew: I take it when you say 'liberal' you are meaning it with capital 'L' or in quotation marks, rather than in the classical definition of the word.

Perkins: Yes, the liberals of today have a rather strange nature, they seek to cloak themselves in the word 'liberalism' when in reality they are trying to transfer individual responsibility off the shoulders of the individual onto the shoulders of the government, which in the long run, is saddled upon the taxpayers and the people.

Morphew: So the liberalism of today is virtually synonymous with totalitarianism?

Perkins: Well, you could say that in a certain sense.

Morphew: The liberals that you know, do you find that these college students and faculty members are truly liberal in the true definition of the word or are they rather intolerant and close-minded in their viewpoints?

Perkins: Well, some are intolerant and close-minded. I feel that many of them are caught in this net we call 'security-mindedness.' To them, security is the prime achievement in life, not individual initiative.

Morphew: Do you believe that the liberals today are demanding too much conformity generally?

Perkins: Yes, Dick, I would say they are. They demand an awful lot of conformity, conformity that we don't think they should demand of the people.

Morphew: You spoke of the depression generation being the liberal generation, the generation which grew up in the 1930s and has its mind collectively fixed on security. What does the new generation want?

Perkins: The generation of college students today, Dick, want most of all the opportunity for individual accomplishment. They would like to see the government control limited as much as possible. They believe in the freedom of the individual, government by law rather than government by men political expediency. I would say the central theme of today's conservatism is concerned with the whole nature of man and not his narrow, materialistic side as many of our liberal friends seem to want to center their liberalism on.

Morphew: Do you believe the effect of the liberal trend in government during the past 2 decades has been the leveling off of American society?

Perkins: Yes, I would say that liberalism has had the effect of crushing the society into one mass, one bleak, mediocre mass in which everyone is rushing pell mell toward one objectivity (sic) and that of course is complete security.

Morphew: In exchange for that, what would the conservative student of today offer?

Perkins: The conservative student of today would offer more personal freedom, more individual liberty. The right to be wrong is as important as the right to be right. Now, who is to say whether the liberals or the conservative are in the ultimate right or wrong? However, the liberals seek to subject their ambitions to the total picture which is government control of almost every area of human existence.

Morphew: What type of articles are in your newspaper?

Perkins: Well, mostly the articles are our own opinions of current events and important issues that arrive throughout the country, throughout the world. It is strictly a conservative opinion of what is going on or what we think is important.

Morphew: Does it take a partisan stand?

Perkins: Well, not as such, Dick. We are conservative and we encourage those who are conservative. We did not endorse any candidate during the presidential election for several reasons.

Morphew: Do you believe the young conservative is taking an active enough interest in current affairs?

Perkins: Yes, the young conservatives today are very concerned with politics, in fact, large numbers of them flocked to the political speeches during the past presidential campaign. This was one of the high points of the campaign, the number of young people. For a person to be conservative today he would have to be interested because to be conservative would be to more or less go against the crowd.

Morphew: One of the propaganda techniques in recent years has been to equate the word 'conservative' with the word 'reactionary' what is your reaction to being called a reactionary? Or has it happened to you?

Perkins: Oh yes, I've been called a reactionary, however, history will point out a very humorous fact. The liberals in reality are the reactionaries. They are seeking to return us to man's oldest form of government, that of centralization and our republic-type government which we conservatives like or like to endorse, under which our nation operates is a relative babe-in-arms when compared to centralized government, which of course, the liberals basically advocate.

Morphew: Are conservatives trying to turn back the clock, as has been implied?

Perkins: No, I wouldn't say we're trying to turn the clock back, we're just trying to keep the clock running.

Morphew: If anyone in our audience would like to receive a copy of your newspaper, how could they get it?

Perkins: Well, they could write: The Campus Conservative, Box 4283, Jackson, Mississippi.

Morphew: Repeats it...