

Townhall

Ben Shapiro Debates The Young Turks' Ana Kasparian on American Exceptionalism, Political Divide, CRT

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The Daily Wire's Ben Shapiro debated The Young Turks' Ana Kasparian Monday on the next generation of political leaders at the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry's annual dinner.

The conversation began with the two being asked by the moderator if they felt that America was a disappointment, a suggestion that Shapiro vehemently opposed.

"I obviously believe that the United States is an exceptional country, I think that our history is filled with moments of glory," Shapiro said. "It's also filled with some terrible tragedy and some terrible evil. There's no question about any of that. To suggest that America is a disappointment is to suggest that utopia is a real place. Whenever you say something is a disappointment, you have to say: compared to what. What exactly are you shooting for? Compared to the ideal? Of course, everybody is a disappointment. Saints are disappointments compared to the ideal."

"But if what you're talking about is America as a whole is somehow disappointing compared to, for example, what other countries around the world stand for or what they have provided to their citizens or what they've provided to the globe, then by no means is America a disappointment," he continued. "America has a tremendous success story. In fact, it's the greatest success story in world history."

And while Kasparian agreed that America is, "for the most part, an extraordinary country," she also said that she thinks it has "failed to live up to its ideals" and is "rigged in favor of the powerful." She cited examples of Senators downplaying the threat of COVID-19 and selling stocks following a closed-door meeting regarding the coronavirus, likely referring to Sens.

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and James Inhofe (R-OK), as well as former Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA), who each sold shares following a January briefing about the virus.

Speaking on political division in America, Kasparian said that both liberals and conservatives are to blame, and also admitted to participating in "manufacturing culture wars."

"Instead of being oblivious, or delusional about it, it's important to acknowledge when you've made the mistakes," she said. "And so the demonizing doesn't help. At the end of the day, we have to realize that we're all Americans, we all want the same thing. Fundamentally, we are the same. We might have different solutions, different ideas but demonizing the other side doesn't help to accomplish any solutions.

Shapiro says he agrees that political division cannot be attributed solely to one ideology, but went on to note that only the far left are the only ones who do not fear sharing their political opinions, citing a study from the CATO Institute.

They both concurred that it is unacceptable for individuals to dig up old tweets in an attempt to negatively impact a person's life.

Kasparian then claimed that critical race theory is not taught in elementary schools and called GOP efforts to ban the doctrine a distraction, to which Shapiro pointed out is inaccurate as teachings assigned in elementary schools include books from author Ibram X. Kendi, who notably wrote, "How to be an Antiracist." Kasparian went on to say that CRT should be taught to youth if it is educating them about systemic racism.

The two further discussed education, which Kasparian said should be entirely public.

"The best education in the world currently takes place in Finland," she said. "They have the top education model and they have completely banned private education, I would do the same."

Shapiro pushed back by stating that a method deemed successful in one country would not necessarily have the same impact in the U.S. He also pointed out that America's public schools have increasingly been failing as the federal education budget has been raised over the course of the last three decades.

"If COVID had one decent effect, it was more people taking their kids out of the public schools," he said.

