

LEFT-FASCISM AWARENESS WEEK

By Don Feder

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During the week of October 22-26, David Horowitz and his Freedom Center held a series of events at 100 campuses for Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week, intended to counter standard academic nitwitary about the war on terrorism (“America is evil,” “We brought it on ourselves,” “9/11 was a Republican conspiracy”).

Admirable though this was, attention must be called to an even more imminent threat.

By the authority vested in me (by myself), I hereby designate the week of November 5th *Left-Fascism Awareness Week* – a time to consider the clear and present danger to free speech emanating from the left, from academic Jacobins to Hillary, Harry and Nancy.

From college campuses to the halls of Congress, an intellectual reign of terror is building whose objective is to guillotine the Bill of Rights.

The thud of jackboots resounds in two recent incidents.

In the bluest of blue states (hence, one of the most fascistic), the Massachusetts legislature just voted to expand the buffer zone around abortion clinics from 18 to 35 feet. Within that bubble, the First Amendment is suspended. In the speech-suppression zone, it’s a crime to approach a woman entering a clinic, to attempt to hand her a piece of literature or to otherwise try to dissuade her from having an abortion.

Protests can be held adjacent to army bases, in front of churches, even outside the United States Supreme Court. But, for the left, unimpeded access to abortion trumps every civil liberty, including freedom of speech and protest. Feminists won't be content until there's a mile-wide speech-suppression zone around abortion clinics. Presumably, within the protest-free zone, writing pro-life letters to the editor will still be allowed – at least for now.

During Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week, Horowitz got to experience fascism first hand – but not the Islamic variety.

On the evening of October 24, the former New Left leader tried to address an audience of over 300 (including students, faculty and the general public) at Emory University. His speech was sponsored by the Emory chapter of the College Republicans. God forbid a university itself should sponsor a controversial speaker on the right.

The goon squad turned out in force – Amnesty International, Veterans for Peace, Students for Justice in Palestine (Suicide Bombers R Us) and the ironically misnamed National Project to Defend Dissent & Critical Thinking in Academia (with a truncheon).

The defenders of dialogue shouted obscenities at Horowitz. Between loud chants, sign-waving and other disruptive tactics, Horowitz was unable to continue his speech and finally had to be escorted off the stage by campus police.

Horowitz had it easy, compared to Minuteman founder Jim Gilchrist, who was silenced at Columbia University almost a year earlier, when leftists rushed the stage while campus police stood by inspecting their fingernails.

In September, Columbia went to extraordinary lengths to provide a forum for Iranian President and notorious anti-Semite Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. President Lee Bollinger made some cutting remarks before Ahmadinejad's speech, but no interruptions were tolerated. The university itself invited Iran's president to share his very deep thoughts. Anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism – all receive a respectful hearing in the Ivy League. The effort to defend America's borders is beyond the pale.

It's telling that in the institution the left controls most completely (academia), dissent is disposed of with ruthless efficiency.

At America's bastions of intellectual excellence, a conservative speaker takes his life in his hands trying to discuss any of the following: the connection between Islam and terrorism, immigration, affirmative action, homosexuality and global warming. For the time being, conservatives lecturers can still talk about abolishing the inheritance tax or the benefits of school choice – for the time being.

Shouting down or assaulting non-conformist speakers is only part of the totalitarian mosaic. Students are regularly punished for bad thoughts, while administrators go to extraordinary lengths to shove approved notions into malleable minds.

At Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, student Troy Scheffler is under interim suspension for having the temerity to challenge campus orthodoxy involving handguns.

Shortly after the Virginia Tech massacre, Hamline President Linda Hanson sent the standard reassuring e-mail to the "campus community." Scheffler replied, criticizing the administration's gun ban. Odd thought that – If an armed madman breaks into his classroom, a student might want to be able to defend himself.

Hamline decided it was more than odd – that it was a sign of mental instability. Schleffler received a hand-delivered letter from the administration informing him that his response was “deemed to be threatening,” and he was being placed on suspension, which could only be lifted if he agreed to a “mental-health evaluation” by a licensed professional – shades of the Soviet Union, where dissidents were routinely locked away in mental hospitals.

Compare the relatively mild treatment of Seung-Hui Cho, the Virginia Tech student who killed 32 before committing suicide. Cho was never ordered into therapy by the school, despite ample evidence of aberrant behavior (including violent writings and stalking two of his classmates). In academia, ideological offenses always carry a stiffer penalty.

Under fire from FIRE (the Foundation for Individual Rights In Education), which also represents Schleffler, last week, the University of Delaware announced it was ending a reeducation program to rival North Korean self-criticism sessions.

The Residence Life Education program was a brazen attempt to compel students to adhere to the left’s mindset. Dormitory students (approximately 7,000) were forced to participate in diversity training sessions, where they were taught that “a racist is one who is both privileged and socialized on the basis of race by a white supremacist system.”

The program’s stated goal was to instill certain “competencies” (attitudes), including: “Students will recognize that systemic oppression exists in our society.” “Students will recognize the benefits of dismantling systems of oppression.” And “Students will be able to utilize their knowledge of sustainability to change their daily habits and consumer mentality.”

All that was missing was a singing of the Internationale, quotes from Chairman Mao's Little Red Book and a confession session with the Rhyming Reverend.

Leftist mind-control starts in grade-school (in Massachusetts, first-graders are acclimated to same-sex marriage with a fairy-tale about a king who marries a king) and percolates up.

Late last month, the U.S. 6th. District Court of Appeals ruled in favor of former Boyd County, Ky. high school student Timothy Morrison, who was told not to express Christian views on homosexuality during "diversity training" (where diverse viewpoints are particularly unwelcome).

Morrison was represented by the Alliance Defense Fund. In its opinion, the 6th. Circuit observed: "Although a favorable decision cannot provide Morrison an opportunity to travel back in time and utter the speech he withheld, it can provide him with nominal damages. Even though these damages amount to little, they serve to vindicate his rights."

No one is safe from censorship threats – not even America's most influential talk show host – or, perhaps one should say, especially. The more influential the conservative, the more tempting the target for leftwing censors.

In early October, the Congressional left got all lathered up over a deliberate distortion of a remark Rush Limbaugh made on his talk show (weekly audience, 20 million). Limbaugh challenged a man who claimed to be an Army Ranger and said he'd witnessed U.S. atrocities in Iraq. Limbaugh called him a "phony soldier." The left then accused Rush of calling all military personnel who oppose administration policy phony soldiers. A distortion and a smear often precede a gag order.

In an obvious attempt at intimidation, Harry Reid and 40 other Senators fired off a letter to the head of Clear Channel Communications, which syndicates Rush's show, demanding that he disavow what Limbaugh didn't say.

Retired General and failed presidential aspirant Wesley Clark (heroic slayer of Serbs) demanded that Limbaugh's show be taken off Armed Services Radio, probably to be replaced by something consensus-building, like reruns of Rosie O'Donnell on "The View." "I think his comments just cross the line," Clark intoned.

"Now, I think that when it crosses the line (*there's that line again*) and its free speech, it's fine." However "when it crosses a line and it's put on and paid for by the US taxpayer, I think that's another matter," the former NATO commander observed.

Apparently, Clark has never heard of PBS and NPR, never mind taxpayer funds flowing to Planned Parenthood, Legal Services and a cadre of other partisan advocates.

The foregoing is a prelude to something the left has been salivating for – resurrection of the FCC's 1949 Fairness Doctrine, and its application to talk radio. Senator Norm Coleman says even the threat "serves to chill freedom of speech."

The left is planning to use the doctrine (which the FCC itself repealed in 1987) to force talk stations to achieve "balance" in the views presented.

Because the left can't compete in the marketplace of ideas (quick, name six successful leftist talk-show hosts), it is driven to silence conservative commentary. With a new Fairness Doctrine in place (talker Neal Boortz says that if Hillary is elected president, it's a done deal), stations will simply drop controversial hosts, rather than undergo FCC scrutiny and be forced to present forums

for dozens of competing views that have no audience (except for Dennis Kucinich and ET).

Rest assured, *The New York Times* and network television will continue to present their doctrinaire opinions in the guise of news coverage. The Fairness Doctrine is intended as a club that strikes only in one direction.

Another device for punishing dissent is hate crimes legislation. In May, the House of Representatives voted 237 to 180 to add “gender, sexual orientation or gender identity” to federal hates crime law.

Representative Steny Hoyer of Maryland said the House vote represented “a statement of what America is -- a society that understands that we accept differences.” Wrong. It’s the left’s statement that those who refuse to accept its sexual dogma will get no quarter.

Take the “Philadelphia 11,” a group of Christians ranging in age from 17 to 72 (desperate characters all) who were arrested in October, 2004 for peacefully protesting at a gay rights celebration in the City of Brotherly Love.

Charged with felonies including riot, criminal conspiracy and ethnic intimidation (a hate crime), if convicted on all charges, each could have been sentenced to 47 years in prison.

After viewing a video of the incident, Common Pleas Judge Pamela Dembe dismissed the charges, observing: “We can not stifle speech because we don’t want to hear it.” Unless, of course, “we” is the left, and the speech is politically incorrect.

But that’s exactly what happened in this case. (The Philadelphia 11 were arrested and prosecuted at the behest of gay

activists, who increasingly control the operations of big city governments). And that's exactly the way a sexual-orientation amendment to federal hate-crimes law would work.

The French Revolution (where the roots of modern totalitarianism lie), didn't start with the Reign of Terror. It began with an attack on absolute monarchy and aristocratic privilege and promulgation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man (chief among them, free speech and freedom of conscience).

It wasn't long – actually, about 5 years -- before the Committee of Public Safety was cutting off the heads of anyone who challenged its authority, expressed sympathy for enemies of the republic or even showed insufficient revolutionary zeal.

Thus the inevitable degeneration of self-righteous ideologues from I-disapprove-of-what-you-say-but-I-will-defend-to-the-death-your-right-to-say-it (Voltaire) to shouting down opposition speakers, treating dissent like psychosis, speech-suppression zones, Residence Life Education programs, the Fairness Doctrine and hate crimes laws.

At least brown-shirts of the right were easily identified by their armbands, funny walk and public book-burnings. Brown-shirts of the left continue to profess their devotion to free speech, while squashing the First Amendment under a hobnailed boot.

This commentary formerly appeared at GrassTopsUSA.org