

THEY'RE SO SMART AND WE'RE SO DUH – THE INTELLECTUAL PRETENSIONS OF THE LEFT

By Don Feder

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It's one thing to be sneered at by *The New York Times*, but *The Cape Cod Times*? What next, being reviled by a suburban shoppers weekly?

An April 11th editorial in that learned journal (“Tea Party tactics: Can we learn from the history of anti-intellectualism?”) charged that the Tea Parties were the latest sign of the grass-roots rebellion against the intelligentsia. “Faced with 20th-century celebration of reason, rationalism, science worship, big government, naturalism, materialism and idealism,” the paper observed, “the far right has chafed at its inability to stem the tide.” Note the maladroit lumping together of big government with reason and science.

And so, the knuckle-draggers of Tea Party America have turned their slack-jawed gaze on their intellectual betters. *The If-You're-Fond-of-Sand-Dunes-And-Salty-Air Times* claims: “Today, the Tea Party movement echoes, by and large, the long-standing tradition of characterizing intellectuals as pretentious know-it-all who, while well-educated, possess neither morality nor common sense.”

Perhaps that's because history is full of examples of well-educated monsters. The Nazi student movement took over German universities long before Hitler came to power. The mass book-burnings which took place in the Reich in May of 1933 were orchestrated by the German Students' Association (Deutsche Studentenschaft), with the enthusiastic support of the German professoriate. Following in that grand tradition, storm troopers of the campus left terrorize dissident speakers (the 21st century equivalent of non-Aryan ideas).

But the intellectual light of the land of tourist kitsch and twin lobsters for \$19.95 isn't through with us troglodytes. “For extreme conservatives (*everyone to the right of Dennis Kucinich*), higher education seems always to lead to threats to the stability of the social order. And the contemplative side of the mind, which is what defines the intellect, has always been feared and distrusted.”

The media left assumes that conservatives fear and distrust higher education because we're mostly semi-literates with bad teeth, who drive pickup trucks and marry our cousins. But Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to have a 4-year college degree. According to the National Education Studies, based on data from 1995 to 2005, 27% of self-identified Democrats had a 4-year degree, versus 36% of Republicans -- although, admittedly, most of us didn't pursue majors as intellectually challenging as journalism.

Still, anyone who can define higher education today as reflecting “the contemplative side of the mind,” hasn't been on campus since students stopped wearing

argyle socks and doing the Charleston. Most undergrads can't place the Civil War within half-a-century, have the vocabulary of fifth-graders of a generation ago, and include binge-drinking among their scholarly pursuits. The prospect of encountering a serious idea at one of these institutions is comparable to meeting a woman's studies major who shaves her legs.

When I worked for the *Boston Herald*, I once had a letter from a student at a well-respected private college urging me to "tell the hole truth (*sic.*)" I don't recall if he meant the truth about black holes or potholes.

The problem with colleges and universities is that they represent not the lofty heights of learning but what's been called the closing of the American mind.

As we approach the second decade of the 21st century, academia is distinguished primarily by intellectual rigidity. On the average college campus, debate is discouraged and unorthodox ideas vigorously suppressed. At Ohio State University in 2006, almost the entire faculty filed harassment charges against a librarian for recommending four conservative books to incoming freshmen. (Building a bonfire and consigning "It Takes A Family" and "The Professors" to the flames would have been too obvious.)

Oh how the *Cape Cod Times* longs for the days when conservatives could speak in more than monosyllables. "It is disappointing to see that in the passing of William F. Buckley Jr., who was a genuine conservative intellectual, the void has been filled, to a large degree, by populist demagogues who fan the flames of class warfare while ranting about a lost America," the journal sniffs.

Would that be the same William F. Buckley, Jr., who once remarked, "I would rather be governed by the first two thousand people in the Boston telephone directory than the two thousand people on the faculty of Harvard University"? How the host of PBS's "Firing Line" must have feared and distrusted the contemplative side of the mind, as manifested at Whatsamatta U.

The left's token conservative intellectual also observed: "The largest cultural menace in America is the conformity of intellectual cliques which, in education as well as the arts, are out to impose upon the nation their modish fads and fallacies In this cultural issue, we are, without reservation, on the side of excellence (rather than newness) and honest intellectual combat (rather than conformity)."

The *Times'* compliant is a typical media conceit – We're so smart it hurts, while you're dumber than dirt. Most of the reporters and editors I encountered in two decades of journalism weren't exactly Mensa members – many would have difficulty spelling Mensa.

Opponents of the left can never be merely misguided; we're always stupid or evil. Thus Bush and Reagan were reputed to be 40-watt bulbs, while Carter, Clinton and

Obama are said to have intellects that shine like a supernova. Every time Bubba's zipper went down his IQ went up.

The man Obama called his mentor thinks the United States government invented HIV and crack cocaine as "a means of genocide against people of color." I wonder if, like his hero Louis Farrakhan, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright thinks the white race was created by a renegade black scientist named Yakub, 6,000 years ago. This is the great mind that shaped our president's prodigious intellect.

Get him away from a teleprompter, and the president sounds like Chevy Chase doing Gerald Ford on the old "Saturday Night Live." While campaigning for the White House in Oregon, in May 2008, Obama disclosed: "Over the past 15 months, we've traveled to every corner of the United States. I've now been in *57 states*." The president may have been thinking of the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference, an entity he often confuses with the United States of America.

At a speech in Strasbourg in April 2009, the savant referred to the language of Austria as – what else? --"Austrian." Remarking on the similarities between American and European politics, the president observed: "There's a whole lot of – I don't know what the term is in *Austrian* – wheeling and dealing" What's the Austrian for "dummkopf"?

At this year's national prayer breakfast, conducted in Arabic, when speaking of a Navy corpsman, the prodigy-in-chief pronounced the word "corpse-man" – you know, like the United States Marine Corpse. To paraphrase the butler in "Arthur," "usually, one must go to a bowling alley" to meet a man of the president's "stature."

Vice Joe President Biden speaks gibberish, fluently. As a candidate in 2008, Biden told Katy Couric that when the stock market crashed in 1929, President Roosevelt went on television to explain the crisis to his fellow Americans. Oh, stop nitpicking, the media harrumphed, when it was noted that Hoover was president on Black Friday, Roosevelt took office in 1933, and the first televised presidential address was in 1947. (FDR's fireside chats were via radio.) Maybe Joe was quoting one of Neil Kinnock's speeches, without attribution.

Any list of great minds of the donkey serenade must include Nancy Pelosi, who told us in 2009 that unless the administration's latest stimulus package passed, "500 million Americans would lose their jobs." In a nation of 330 million, that means an unemployment rate of roughly 151%. So, the sea level will rise 20-feet due to global warming (according to Al Gore), and we'll have triple digit unemployment.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is the stuff of legend. In January, the Nevadan attributed Obama's political success to his pale skin and lack of a "Negro dialect." And he doesn't tap-dance, another distinct advantage. Reid also paused to remark, "You can always tell when it is summertime (*in Washington*) because you can smell the visitors"

(OK, so we're stupid and we stink) -- this from a man who looks like he just crawled out of a landfill.

Reid brings to mind of a comment often attributed to former House Speaker Joe Cannon, who is said to have commented about one of his rivals, "Every time the man opens his mouth, he detracts from the sum total of human wisdom."

The late-Ted Kennedy (expelled from Harvard for cheating on an exam), who was a resident of Hyannis on the Cape, was another deep-thinker, or, as he was wont to say, "I-ah, er-ah, well-ah ... Sammy Sooser."

Point of clarification: If leftists are so brilliant, why do they keep coming up with policies and plans that defy logic and human experience? To wit:

- Amnesties – The nation is awash with illegal aliens (an estimated 12 million). The amnesty of the mid-1980s resulted in a flood of border-jumpers. We have the world's most opulent welfare benefits. Eligibility requirements are loose as a Clinton intern. (Build it and they will come – pronto.) So, let's legalize "undocumented workers," give them lots of free stuff, allow them to bring in all of their relatives legally – and it will, what: discourage more from coming here?
- Islam is the "religion of peace" – This turns reality on its head and spins it around like a whirling dervish. If Islam is the religion of peace, Nazism must be the ideology of brotherhood. Rape is an expression of solicitude. Strip-mining is environmentally conscious. Pornography is romantic, the Russians are diplomatic and the French are modest and unassuming.
- We can tax, spend and regulate our way to prosperity. Taking more money from the "super-rich," whose investments fuel economic expansion and job creation, will have no discernible impact on the economy, say economic illiterates of the left.
- Obama-care will be the latest government success story – along with the United States Postal Service, food stamps and the federal debt. We're going to provide health-insurance for millions currently uninsured. We'll be allowed to keep our physicians, premiums won't rise and medical services won't be rationed. The program will be administered by a triumvirate of Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy.
- Limiting private gun ownership will reduce crime. In the presence of firearms, leftists become like the savages of New Guinea, hiding in terror when an aircraft is spotted overhead. Everybody knows that inanimate objects have minds of their own. Hence, guns cause crime. And cars cause vehicular homicide.

- Peace through weakness – based on the theory, verified throughout history, that bullies always choose the strongest kid on the block to pick on. It was their victims' military prowess which encouraged the Germans to invade Belgium in 1914 and Poland in 1939. But the left, led by the White House peacenik, goes on its merry way dismantling America's defenses, on the theory that this will make our citizens safer and our nation more secure.
- Islamic terrorism is the result of our offending Muslim sensibilities and not showing due deference for their sacred sand piles. If Muslim murder is a natural response to hurt feelings, what did the United States do that caused them to destroy the Byzantine Empire in the 15th century, occupy Spain, Greece and the Balkans for hundreds of years and engage in that fine old Islamic custom of honor-killing?

The mind-numbing stupidity of liberals aside, their pretensions are laughable, given their fascist mindset (mentality)

The hallmark of an authentic intellectual is willingness to engage in a frank discussion, or at least to let the other side be heard.

Modern liberals might as well march around wearing jackboots and arm bands.

Censorship is the sine qua non of the left. Whether it's campus speech codes (which punish the expression of ideas liberals find abhorrent), hate-crime laws or ongoing attempts to destroy talk-radio, liberals are committed to silencing the opposition. Intellectuals who fear intellectual competition, that's a new one.

Beyond censorship, the left's seeks to short-circuit an open discussion of a broad range of issues, where it tells the debate is closed.

Thus, if you doubt liberal dogma on global warming, AIDS education, abortion, gay marriage, and other matters where the masses refuse to bow their heads, tug their forelocks and do as they're told, you're labeled anti-science, misogynistic, racist, homophobic and generally hateful.

On climate change, the left (the mainstream media included) smears skeptics by calling them "global-warming deniers." The allusion to the Holocaust is intentional. Those who question revealed wisdom on sea-levels rising 20 feet and polar bears surfing in Hawaiian shirts are portrayed as a lunatic-fringe -- flat-earthers of the 21st. century.

The intellectual tactics of contemplative minds on the left include censorship, fear of opposing ideas, intimidation, shouting down dissenting speakers, indoctrination and smears.

As a matter of fact, conservatives are intimidated by all of the big brains in the liberal camp. We're also envious of Hillary's good looks, Michael Moore's physique, Rosie O'Donnell's charm and John Edwards' integrity.

It's doubtful that, outside its editorial offices, anyone takes *The Cape Cod Times* seriously. But the paper still provides a useful service. On the Cape, there's never a shortage of fish to be wrapped.

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