

# Campus costs of feelings patrols

Anyone who still believes that free speech counts for something on our campuses should take a look at the University of California, Berkeley. The Daily Californian, the student paper, ran an ad, "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Slavery Is a Bad Idea — and Racist Too," placed by the conservative author David Horowitz. But the campus culture is committed to the notion that reparations are a good idea. Reparations Awareness Day had just been held. So Mr. Horowitz had to be wrong. And people who are wrong hurt the feelings of people who are right, so they should not be heard.

Deeply offended by the airing of a political position they did not agree with, angry leftists stormed the offices of the student paper, thrashed about for a while, screaming and weeping and trying to intimidate staff. Then they fanned out around the campus to steal the remaining copies of the offending edition from their racks.

Most of the campus uproar was conducted in the language of feel-

ings, as if the emotional response of some students adds up to a powerful case for suppressing an argument against reparations. "It hurt so much," said one protester. "Indescribably hurtful," said another. "Disrespectful to the minority population," said a third. "It was completely opposed to what I've been taught." Many said they no longer felt welcome on campus.

The usual script in these matters

calls for immediate groveling by the editor. "I think the ad is inflammatory and inappropriate and we should not have run it. This is a disaster," the Daily Cal editor said. The paper issued a formal apology for allowing itself to become "an inadvertent vehicle for bigotry." But groveling is never enough, so protesters demanded 10 editorial columns rebutting David Horowitz's 10 arguments and "a person to review the paper for offensive racial context" (i.e. a censor).

The editor said the \$1,200 Mr. Horowitz paid for the ad may be turned over to black groups on campus. This would seem to establish the principle that people offended by a political ad are somehow entitled to the fee charged for publishing it.

Political correctness hovers over campuses like an established religion, so running an ad from a prominent heretic is considered a grave matter. Mr. Horowitz sent the ad to 35 college papers. At this printing, only six have run it, and two of those apologized for doing so (Berkeley

and University of California, Davis). Leftist criticism of leftist censorship is rare, but a column in the liberal Sacramento News and Review regretted that "both young editors rolled over like trained dogs . . . running apologies in the face of public pressure."

What is so odd about this case is that Mr. Horowitz's argument is one embraced by most Americans. His text did include one or two sour touches almost guaranteed to irritate. One is that welfare benefits and affirmative action are already a form of reparations. He should expect criticism for this, not censorship. But his ad wasn't "blatantly inflammatory." It was a responsible, well-reasoned political argument that students should have been able to read without swooning.

Mr. Horowitz argued that there is no valid reason for most Americans today, including immigrants, to pay for crimes committed by a tiny minority over a century ago. He makes the case that the reparations issue plays into the hand of those who inhibit racial progress by con-

stantly stressing grievance and victimization. An informal reader survey by the Atlanta Constitution shows 88 percent to 90 percent opposed to reparations, 10 percent in favor. Only on the PC-ridden campus could a conventional opinion held by a majority of up to 90 percent of Americans be considered toxic.

Why do colleges behave this way? The most obvious answer is that PC culture divides the world into oppressors and oppressed, with only the oppressed having the clear right to free speech. Even before the term "political correctness" was invented, the double standard on free speech was alive and well at Berkeley. In the early 1980s, Ronald Reagan's U.N. ambassador, Jeane Kirkpatrick, was shouted down and kept from speaking at Berkeley. Many faculty members at the time doubted that she had a right to speak on campus.

Stanley Kurtz of the Hudson Institute cited this incident last week as a portent of things to come, arguably the kickoff in the culture war. "Many

argued, in the Marxist fashion, that oppressors have no right and that classic liberal notions of fairness are themselves a cover for the despotism of the powerful," he wrote in National Review's online site.

That notion that free speech is a tool of the oppressor is now mainstream in the campus culture. This is why campus newspapers with the wrong news keep getting stolen, posters for the wrong events keep getting torn down, and speakers with the wrong views keep getting disinvited or silenced. Recent non-speakers at Berkeley, home of the free-speech movement, include conservative organizer Daniel Flynn (shouted down) and former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (threats of violence, advised to withdraw by police). Berkeley gets another chance to oppose free speech this week. David Horowitz is scheduled to speak there tomorrow.

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