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## COLUMN: Vin Suprynowicz

**Meet the new boss ... same as the old boss**

Thirty years ago, the socialists who discovered they could successfully harness their collectivist rhetoric to the anti-Vietnam War movement (which is not to say that all who opposed that war joined the ComIntern, by any means) chafed and rebelled against the Eisenhower generation's presumption that the Dulles brothers knew what they were doing, rendering unpatriotic any opposition to the foreign policy status quo. That younger generation swore that, if and when they were ever in charge, things would be different.

Well, they are, and they are.

It's just that the "difference" they were promising turns out to be not



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so much about open debate and tolerance of minority opinions, as about which opinions are now unpopular enough to be censored.

"Across the nation, in response to the atrocities of Sept. 11, 2001, and to the debates and discussions that have occurred in their wake, many college and university administrators are acting to inhibit the free expression of the citizens of a free society," writes Thor L. Halvorssen of the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE).

The opinions most likely to be repressed may have shifted 180 degrees ... but not the instinct to silence that with which we do not agree.

At Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., "The chair of the department of sociology, professor Royce Singleton, demanded that a secretary remove an American flag that she had hung in the departmental office," Halvorssen reports. "The flag was in memory of her friend Todd Beamer, who fought and died on the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 over Pennsylvania. When she refused, Singleton removed it himself. After unfavorable publicity, the college apologized, but the flag in question was moved to the department of psychology."

At Duke University, the administration shut down a Web site after professor Gary Hull posted an article titled "Terrorism and Its Appeasement," calling for a strong military response to the terrorist attacks. The foundation took professor's Hull's case to the print and broadcast media.

"Shamed by widespread publicity, Duke reinstated Hull's Web page, but required him to add a disclaimer that the views expressed in the article did not reflect the views of the university," a disclaimer Duke had never previously required on any other faculty Web page, Halvorssen notes.

In September, the University of Massachusetts granted a permit for a student rally to protest any use of force in waging the war against terrorism. The protest was held. Another student group reserved the same place to hold a rally in support of America's policy towards terrorism, but two days before the rally their permit was revoked.

"Students held the rally anyway, and their pamphlets were publicly vandalized with impunity," Halvorssen reports.

In a widely reported case at San Diego State University, an international student, Zewdalem Kebede, overheard several other foreign students speaking loudly in Arabic in the library, expressing delight about the terrorist attacks. Kebede engaged the students and, in Arabic, challenged their positions. Kebede was accused by the university of abusive behavior toward the four students, formally admonished and warned that "future incidents [will result in] serious disciplinary sanctions."

At Penn State University, one professor's Web page advocated vigorous military action as a response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. Penn State's Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Robert Secor, informed the professor that the comments were "insensitive and perhaps even intimidating."

At Penn State, "intimidating" expression is grounds for dismissal, notes Halvorssen.

The point here is not just how out of touch left-wing academia seems to be with heartland American opinion -- though it does remain to be seen how long rank-and-file citizens will continue to pay vast sums to have their children "educated" by an intellectual class now revealed to have more sympathy with the purported grievances of Osama bin Laden than with the right of 5,300 innocent Americans to go to work in the morning without being murdered.

For it hardly solves the problem if those on "the right" grow outraged to have their flags taken down ... while asserting that suppressing the opinions of communists and Wahhabi Muslims is merely common sense.

I find the views of both the latter-mentioned parties to be by turns laughable and repulsive. But the solution is to hear them out and then ridicule them mercilessly, rubbing their rhetorical faces in their own failures. If the Muslim peoples are the chosen of God, how come so many of them live in flyblown hellholes with no flush toilets while their corrupt poohbahs bask in all the oil wealth?

The pathetic buggers who cheered the mass murders of Sept. 11 cannot win a free debate -- not when Exhibits A and B are their own backward, corrupt, impoverished nations and repressive social structures, manically reverting to levels of depravity and masochism not seen in the civilized world in 300 years.

But the only way to prove that is to engage them in a free debate. So-called "institutions of higher learning" that would bar assertions of fact based on "multicultural sensitivity," curbing robust debate to avoid "offending anyone," aren't worth the fertilizer it takes to keep grass growing on the quad.

The Web site of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education is at [www.thefire.org](http://www.thefire.org).

Vin Suprynowicz, the Review-Journal's assistant editorial page editor, is author of "Send in the Waco Killers." His column appears Sunday.

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