

ISLAMO-FASCISM AWARENESS WEEK: EXPOSE & DEFEAT THIS REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE

David Horowitz has announced “Islamofascism Awareness Week” for October 22-26, to take place on campuses around the country. Horowitz has enlisted some of the most extreme, and dangerous, ideologues as spokespeople, and is working with Christian fundamentalists, military and veteran’s groups, and the entire range of conservative and reactionary student organizations in an attempt to hold what he says will be the largest conservative university protest in US history.

This is a move to deepen the already serious chill in academia by bringing together an aggressive social base and unleashing it on what Horowitz calls the “tenured left.” It seeks to unleash a pogromist and hate-filled atmosphere against Muslim students, equate dissent and critical thinking with treason, attack Women’s Studies Departments, and build the US “will to fight” more wars of aggression in the Middle East, particularly against Iran. It hypocritically claims to oppose the oppression of women and gays under Islamic rule, while promoting Christian fundamentalists who want to outlaw not only abortion but birth control as well, and argue that homosexuality is a sin punishable by death and women should not work outside the home.

“Islamofascism Awareness Week” cannot be allowed to go down unchallenged. It needs to be thoroughly exposed, repudiated and politically defeated. Go to www.terrorismawareness.org for Horowitz’s plans and the list of schools targeted – and visit www.defendcriticalthinking.org for analysis and resources for combatting Horowitz and his dangerous allies.

How DARE these people parade as anti-fascist?!

Anyone familiar with Horowitz and his allies can only respond with outrage to their claim to be opponents of fascism, intolerance and bigotry.

How *dare* David Horowitz, who says that Blacks should be grateful for slavery and that Blacks owe a debt to whites for ending slavery, talk about the “right of all people to live in freedom and dignity”?!

How *dare* Ann Coulter, who said of Muslims, “We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity,” masquerade as an opponent of “all forms of religious supremacism, violence and intimidation”?!

How *dare* Rick Santorum, who equates homosexuality with bestiality and openly advocates the revoking of women’s right to abortion and birth control, parade as a defender of the rights of women and gays?!

Islamofascism Awareness Week: An Avalanche of Lies, Distortions, Bigotry and Hate.

• Horowitz claims that IFAW will confront the “Big Lie” that George Bush created the “war on terror:”

If Bush was just responding to 9/11, why did he target and invade a country that had nothing to do with it? Why did he lie about WMDs to justify that aggression and why is he now threatening another country, Iran, that also had nothing to do with 9/11? And for decades, the US and Israel have destroyed secular governments and forces in the Middle East and elsewhere, while actively supporting Islamic fundamentalist forces, as in Afghanistan. In Iran, the US overthrow of the elected government of Iran in 1953 and the

decades of support for the brutal regime of the Shah contributed to the conditions which gave rise to Islamic fundamentalist rule there.

• “A major theme of the Week will be the oppression of women in Islam.”

The speakers for IFAW include some of the strongest supporters of the Bush administration, whose policies have been catastrophic for women, both here and internationally. Horowitz’s speakers for IFAW include biblical literalists like Frank Pastore who uphold the execution of gays and the equation of abortion with murder. It’s notable that the IFAW petition includes the demand for “The equality of dignity of women and men.” Not equality, but the “equality of dignity” – a meaningless phrase which can be twisted to fit the most patriarchal of view-

points.

• IFAW will feature sit-ins “designed to protest the ... silence of Women’s Studies departments in the face of ... Islamic gynophobia:”

Women’s Studies scholars have actually been at the forefront of supporting the rights of women (and gays and lesbians) under Islamic fundamentalism. Horowitz’s problem with Women’s Studies Departments is not their supposed “silence” but the simple fact that they exist. His website is full of rants directed against Women’s Studies professors. Part of his overall agenda is the elimination of Women’s Studies, along with Ethnic Studies, Social Work, Social Justice, and other programs which arose out of the struggles of the 60s and 70s. And without Women’s Studies

departments and the feminist struggles which gave rise to them, people like Horowitz would not even be giving hypocritical lip-service to the oppression of women anywhere.

• **Horowitz says that IFAW only targets “Islamofascists,” not “non-radical Muslims:”** IFAW is an explicit attempt to demonize and isolate Muslims in this country. Horowitz identifies the Muslim Student Association as a front organization of the Islamofascist jihad intent on world domination, and demands that they sign his petition or be branded as “the enemy.” IFAW speakers like Gregory Davis say that “Islam and its faithful adherents are trying to undermine our secular governments with the ultimate aim of replacing them with Sharia. Terrorism is a means to this end as are Islamic proselytizing, fund-raising, lobbying, education, etc.” Horowitz has also said that “the Palestinians” (not some of them, or just the radical ones, but all of them, in-

cluding those who are not Muslim) “are part of the Islamofascist jihad against the West.”

• **IFAW’s Petition demands “The right of all people to live free from violence, intimidation, and coercion:”**

This, from people who are clamoring for war against Iran, who support Israel’s policies of military occupation, targeted assassinations and collective punishment and who support a government which has slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, engaged in, advocated and legalized torture, and eliminated habeas corpus and other basic civil liberties?

• **IFAW’s Petition supports “The freedom of the individual conscience: to change religions or have no religion at all.”**

IFAW speakers include Christian fundamentalists who believe that anyone who does not

share their literal interpretation of the Bible will go to hell. Rick Santorum, one of the main speakers for IFAW, has said in order to win against “Islamofascism,” “We must educate, engage, evangelize and eradicate . . . We need to do more, as I said, to spread these ideas throughout your campuses.”

• **And from Horowitz’s Frontpage.com**

John Perazzo, who wrote “Why IFAW is Needed” for Horowitz’s frontpage.com, also wrote “Black Racism and ‘The Jena Six.’” He called the Jena 6 a “pack of thugs” and “raging predators,” and says the real problem is “black racism, a disturbingly widespread phenomenon in contemporary America” – while the hanging of nooses from a “whites only” tree (in 2006!) is simply “a dumb (non-violent) prank by a bunch of teenage idiots.”

Some suggestions on what can be done.

- **Call** a meeting (immediately!), to discuss why IFAW is so dangerous, and to make plans to oppose it. Approach progressive political groups, feminist and Women’s Studies Departments, GLBT groups, Muslim student organizations and faculty. Reject the terms of debate set by Horowitz: opposing IFAW does not mean supporting terrorism or Islamic fundamentalism.
- **Defend** professors, Muslim student groups and Women’s Studies Departments, which are under attack.
- **Challenge** organizers and speakers of IFAW at every opportunity with facts and truth.
- **Hold** public forums by faculty and others.
- **Saturate** campuses with flyers and posters, exposing Horowitz, IFAW and what it’s all about.
- **Submit** resolutions opposing IFAW to faculty and student senates.
- **Write** op-eds, place ads, and give interviews to campus and other media.
- **Share** material (flyers, graphics, posters, articles, etc.) with others. Send them to the National Project to Defend Dissent and Critical Thinking in Academia (www.defendcriticalthinking.org). Share your experience and plans, send us reports and updates on your activities, discussions, and plans, so that others around the country can learn from them.

The **National Project to Defend Dissent and Critical Thinking in Academia** was initiated to respond to the nationwide attack against tenured Ethnic Studies Professor Ward Churchill of the University of Colorado. At that time we noted that:

“The Churchill case is not an isolated incident but a concentrated example of a well-orchestrated campaign launched in the name of “academic freedom” and “balance” which in fact aims to purge the universities of more radical thinkers and oppositional thought generally, and to create a climate of intimidation . . . It would be hard to overstate the serious nature of what has already happened, let alone what it would mean should the Regents fire Churchill. If this assault on academe succeeds, the consequences for American society as a whole will be nothing short of disastrous.”

The denial of tenure to DePaul professor Norman Finkelstein is a further indication of this. The Project has been working mainly with university faculty around the country to meet this challenge to critical thinking and academic freedom, which is spearheaded by very tenacious, politically powerful forces with close ties to those around the Bush regime. That includes David Horowitz with his Frontpage.com operation, his Academic Bill of Rights, and the right wing Students for Academic Freedom (SAF); Campus-Watch; and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), a conservative self-appointed academic “watch-dog” group that was founded by Lynne Cheney, the wife of the vice president. These and other forces aim to fundamentally transform the universities from being sites of critical thinking to sites of indoctrination. They are out to create a climate of intimidation on the campuses, targeting faculty and students who dare to challenge the institutional foundations of the United States, or of the motives and interests behind its policies.

The April 12th edition of the New York Review of Books carried An Open Letter initiated by 11 prominent scholars and public intellectuals: Derrick Bell; Noam Chomsky; Juan Cole; Drucilla Cornell; Richard Delgado; Richard Falk; Irene Gendzier; Rashid Khalidi; Mahmood Mamdani; Immanuel Wallerstein; and Howard Zinn.

That letter says in part: “. . . it is crucial that we who belong to the academic community join together to protect those who are the targets of repressive tactics.” And it concludes, “As with oxygen, we become acutely conscious of academic freedom when it is not present in sufficient quantities for normal, healthy breathing. When academic freedom is threatened, the most sustaining response is vigorous defense on principle.”