

# Liberal Authoritarians on Campus

✘ Christine Lagarde, the first woman to head the International Monetary Fund was supposed to speak at the Smith College graduation – until she was disinvited. Her offense, according to a student petition: Representing an organization that runs “directly against Smith’s values to stand in unity with equality for all women, regardless of race, ethnicity or class.”

Ayaan Hirsi Ali was invited to speak at Brandeis commencement. She also was disinvited. Her crime? She called Islam “a destructive, nihilistic cult of death” and “the new Fascism.” Students protested and the invitation was taken back.

As Harvard professor Ruth Wisse wrote in The Wall Street Journal:

“In Nigeria, Islamists think nothing of seizing hundreds of schoolgirls for the crime of aspiring to an education. Here in the United States, the educated class thinks nothing of denying an honorary degree to a fearless Muslim woman who at peril of her life, and in the name of liberal democracy, has insisted on exposing such outrages to the light.”

Robert Birgeneau, a former chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley was disinvited by Haverford College in Pennsylvania for supposedly denying free speech rights to students during the Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011. Students at Haverford and professors who opposed Birgeneau’s invitation said they would let him speak but only if he apologized and gave in to eight other demands. Birgeneau told the authoritarians to buzz off.

Condi Rice was invited to speak at Rutgers but students and faculty protested her role in the Iraq War. Some students

carried signs calling her a “war criminal” supposedly for condoning waterboarding. Ms. Rice disinvited herself.

There are more examples of liberal intolerance on America’s college campuses but you get the idea.

What is so repulsive about all of this is that these are the same students and professors who worship at the altar of diversity; the same people who are constantly telling us that you can’t get a good education unless there’s diversity on campus.

But they obviously don’t mean diversity of opinion. And that’s the kind you need the most at a university. These are nothing more than left wing authoritarians, liberals who forgot how to be liberal – if they ever really knew.

Once, liberals were the ones who said: Even if I disagree with you I’ll defend to the death your right to speak. That was then. Today, too many liberals – especially on college campuses – not only will not defend your right to speak, but will do all they can to silence you.

Imagine if a few closed-minded students in Iran said, “Don’t let that person speak, we don’t agree with what he has to say.” We’d figure: well, that’s what you get in an authoritarian place like Iran. The ayatollahs call the shots over there, even on college campuses.

Well, the ayatollahs also call the shots on too many America’s college campuses, where not-too-smart students and arrogant professors think they’re in a day care center instead of a university and don’t want their precious feelings hurt by words – *words!* – they don’t agree with.

And it happens because these so-called liberals have enablers in important places – like the office of the university president. Too many college presidents lack backbone, they’re weak people who are more than willing to let the lunatics take

over the asylum.

Finally, a personal note: A few days ago I received a letter from Rutgers, my alma mater, asking for money. Recently I wrote a column (in this space) blasting Rutgers for the Condi Rice fiasco. So instead of a check, I put my column in the envelope and just this morning sent it back.

There's an idea for any of you who went to schools that allow a relatively small number of left-wing jerks to bring shame on their universities. Tell the people who run those schools that this time it's *your* feelings that are hurt; this time *you're* the one who is offended, and that you won't give money to an institution that doesn't reflect *your* values. Tell them you're sort of "disinviting" *them*.

Make sure not to let it bother you when they don't catch the irony.