

When 'Dissent' Was a Thing



by Lee Duigon

It was the summer of 1967, and come September, I would start college—four years of it, at least.

To prepare me for the college experience, Rutgers University provided me with a summer reading list, gotta read 'em all or you won't be ready for college (although they never did check to see if I'd read any of them—if only I'd known they were bluffing).

Every last one of those books celebrated “dissent” as the crown of civic virtue. I don't remember the titles. And then, as Day One drew near, I had to go there for “freshman orientation” and a passel of lectures which, again, lauded “dissent.” You'd think I was going for a degree in dissent. It was all they talked about.

Soon enough I learned that “dissent” really meant some kind of duty to oppose the Viet Nam War, attach myself to the Democrat Party, take part in “protests” against the presence of ROTC on campus (awkward for me: I was in ROTC, hoping to become an Army officer after graduation), and nod my head sagely as a gaggle of professors babbled about the wonderfulness of Chairman Mao and Fidel Castro—big names on campus. And we were all supposed to love President Lyndon Johnson until they turned around and declared that we must hate him.

We were all expected to “dissent” from the same things. They didn't like it if you dissented from the dissenters.

Fifty-six years later, you're asking for it if you “dissent”

from Far Left dogma. You don't want to get shoved into sensitivity training, do you? All that exhortation to "dissent" has either vanished or become just another nosedive into political conformity. Go ahead, walk around the campus wearing a MAGA hat and see what happens. And that'd be only one of dozens of daredevil actions you could take. So many ways to go wrong!

Oh, I remember all those lofty words and slogans from my college days. Academic freedom! Free and open inquiry! John Stuart Mill "On Liberty"! The marketplace of ideas! Doesn't look like they meant a single word of it. Our academic freedom—not yours. We can question and inquire—you can't. John Stuart who? Never heard of him. A marketplace of our ideas, not yours. And you'd better have your mind right about Transgender Rights and Climate Change... we know where you live.

The same people who kept clubbing you over the head with "dissent" in 1967 are now the gatekeepers who won't let you in or out unless you know the magic words. The same university which used to claim the mission of expanding your mind... now seeks to shrink it. They seem to be doing a very good job of that.

It doesn't stop when you get out of college, either. Government colludes with Big Tech to censor you, to silence your opinions if you... dissent! So much for the highest civic virtue. The same political party that used to glamorize, promote, and glorify dissent... now seeks to stifle it. And they can always find another pandemic if they need one—it's so good for teaching the public a habit of obedience.

Are we citizens or sheep?

Liberty is not the natural state of a fallen human race. It has to be prized, protected, constantly worked for, constantly defended. Because there are ogres out there who'll take it from us every chance they get.

I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and drop in for a visit: we can dissent together. My articles can also be found at www.chalcedon.edu/ .

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